The Demonstrations of Aphrahat, the Persian Sage

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The Demonstrations of Aphrahat, the Persian Sage

Adam Lehto

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PREFACE

The present work is a revision of my 2003 doctoral dissertation at the University of Toronto. When I began my study of Aphrahat some years before that, I had no intention of producing a complete translation. It was enough to enjoy the discovery of a text that proved to provide a unique window into a fascinating period in the history of Syriac Christianity. It soon became clear, however, that to understand Aphrahat properly demanded familiarity with all of the *Demonstrations*. The complete translation that I produced then facilitated, I trust, a small measure of insight, reflected in a discussion of divine Law, asceticism, and gender in the thought of Aphrahat. But this was not a general introduction to the text. Now that my attempt at such an introduction is finished, it is my hope that it will provide at least a general framework for newcomers to the text, and perhaps contribute in some modest way to the ongoing discussion. The study of Aphrahat is an expanding field, so that he is starting, perhaps, to catch up with his better-known near-contemporary, Ephrem. This is as it should be. Aphrahat has no peer in the representation of early 4th century Syriac Christianity. His *Demonstrations* offer a wealth of material for understanding (or at least for beginning to understand) forms of Christian thought and life that grew up in Persia and that preserved a stronger link with Judaism (despite much traditional polemic) than most of what was on offer in the Greek and Latin spheres. This is all the more important given the significant influence of Greek thought on the Syriac tradition beginning in the 5th century. It is for the exploration of that early Syriac world that the present introduction, translation, and bibliography are offered.

Adam Lehto
May, 2010

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First and foremost, I wish to thank my wife Mary for her constant friendship and support. Her quiet wisdom, generosity, and sense of humour bring joy to my days. Among my academic mentors, I would like to single out Harry Fox, my doctoral supervisor at the University of Toronto. My initial work on Aphrahat would probably not have continued had it not been for Harry's encouragement and guidance. He took the time to follow my translation as I read through, over many sessions in his office, the 600 or so columns of Syriac text in Parisot's critical edition. Harry's patience and insight have been much appreciated. Amir Harrak has always been ready to help when I have been puzzled over Aphrahat's syntax. I have also had the pleasure of working with Amir in the context of the activities of the *Canadian Society for Syriac Studies*, at several of whose meetings he has given me the chance to present research on Aphrahat. Sebastian Brock pointed out some additional entries for my bibliography. Adam Becker and Craig Morrison kindly provided feedback on the introduction that follows. Any weaknesses or errors in the present work are due entirely to my own negligence, and not to any deficiencies in the excellent scholars who have offered their assistance for this project.

INTRODUCTION[1]

1. PROVENANCE AND MANUSCRIPTS

The general title conventionally assigned to this work ('*Demonstrations*') is derived from the initial word[2] found in each of the separate titles that an anonymous editor (presumably)[3] has given to the twenty-three pieces included in the collection. These 'demonstrations' were 'published' in three stages: in 336-7, 343-4, and 345 C.E. Conveniently, the author himself provides dates. At Demonstration 22.25 he states: "I wrote the first ten in the six hundred and forty-eighth year of the kingdom of Alexander son of Philip the Macedonian, as it is written at their end.[4] I have written these last twelve in the six hundred and fifty-fifth year of the kingdom of the Greeks and the Romans (which is the kingdom of Alexander), and in the thirty-fifth year of the king of Persia." In Demonstration

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[1] What follows is an introduction to the text, not an attempt to survey all of the research on the *Demonstrations*. The detailed bibliography that follows will point the interested reader to further areas of study. Other helpful general introductions are to be found in Schwen (1907), Baarda (1975), Pierre (1988), and Bruns (1993).

[2] The term in question is *taḥwitha* (ܬܚܘܝܬܐ). In most cases it means "example", though Aphrahat also uses it to refer to his own writing. Leaving aside the (presumably editorial) titles and concluding formulas, the term occurs in the following passages: 2.15; 2.17; 2.20; 3.2; 4.15; 8.23; 18.12; 20.5; 20.6; 20.7; 22.25; 23.5; 23.12. See Morrison (2008) for a discussion of Aphrahat's use of the term.

[3] George Nedungatt (1980, 68), for example, assumes editorial activity in the creation of the titles. I see no reason to question this assumption.

[4] In fact no date is supplied there.

14.50 we find the following corroboration of the date of the second period of writing: "This letter is written in the month of Shebat, in year six hundred and fifty-five of the kingdom of Alexander son of Phillip the Macedonian, and in the thirty-fifth year of Shapur, king of Persia." Likewise, in 23.69 he says, "I have written this letter to you, my friend, in the month of Ab in the six hundred and fifty-sixth year of the kingdom of Alexander, son of Philip the Macedonian, and in the thirty-sixth year of Shapur, king of Persia, who has stirred up persecution, and in the fifth year after the churches had been uprooted, and in the year in which there was a great ravaging of martyrs in the land of the east, after writing those twenty-two previous chapters, arranged according to letters, one after the other." Three different calendrical systems (Seleucid, Jewish, Persian) are referred to here, and it is often difficult to relate them to each other. The evidence above allows us to conclude, however, that the first ten Demonstrations were sent out some time between September of 336 and September of 337. Likewise, Demonstrations 11-22 were sent out between September of 343 and September of 344, with Demonstration 14 falling in February (which roughly corresponds to Shebat). Since Ab falls in July/August, we can say that Demonstration 23 was composed at that time of year in 345.[5]

One of the earliest surviving Syriac manuscripts (designated B-*B*) contains most of the work. B-*B* (*BM add. 17182*) was written at two different times (474 [Demonstrations 1-10] and 510 [Demonstrations 13-23]), hence the double designation. A number of folios are missing, affecting the coverage of Demonstrations 1, 5, 6, and 7, and Demonstrations 11 and 12 are completely missing. An-

[5] See Fiey (1968), Nedungatt (1980), Pierre (1995), Burgess (1999) and Stern (2004) for detailed discussions of the chronology. Nedungatt (65-66) makes the important observation that the time of composition is not necessarily the same as the time of 'publishing' (which in this case means when the various demonstrations were sent out). He asks the reasonable question: why should we assume that Aphrahat limited his writing to the particular years that he mentions? The time of composition for Demonstration 14, however, seems fixed by the date that is attached to it.

other early Syriac manuscript (A) contains the entire work, along with most of a preface in the form of a 'request for instruction' written by one of Aphrahat's fellow ascetics.[6] Manuscript A (*BM add. 14619*) can be dated to the 6th century, and like B-*B* is written in an Estrangela script. A later manuscript (C; *BM Or. 1017*), dated to 1364, is written in a Jacobite script and contains most of the 23rd Demonstration (up to the middle of section 47) as the opening section of an anonymous chronology. All of these manuscripts are in the British Library. [7]

Textual variants are minimal, and the interpretation of Aphrahat's thought can proceed on a solid textual basis.[8] In the present translation I give only what I consider to be the more significant variants, but even these do not prove to be very important for most purposes.[9]

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[6] Though she does not discuss Aphrahat in detail, Eva Riad leans toward thinking that the preface to the *Demonstrations* is a literary device. She refers, in connection with Aphrahat, to E. Beck's conclusion that the preface in Ephrem's *Letter to Hypatius* is the creation of the author (see Riad, *Studies in the Syriac Preface*, Studia Semitica Upsaliensia 11, Stockholm, 1988, p. 194). There is no way of knowing with certainty whether this request is a literary device or if this other person actually existed. It does seem odd that Aphrahat would have produced two different creedal statements (cf. section 2 of the 'request for instruction' with section 19 of the first Demonstration). Moreover, in both 10.7 and 23.1, references are made to requests for instruction that have been sent to the author, though this does not settle the issue as to whether or not these 'requests' are literary fictions. If this is a literary fiction on the author's part, it has been executed with exception skill, particularly in the realistic details given in 10.9.

[7] For an extended discussion of the manuscripts of the *Demonstrations*, see Wright's preface (1869), and more recently, Pierre (1988, 42-45).

[8] I make one caveat here, and that is that I have not examined the manuscripts for the *Demonstrations* myself, but have relied on Parisot's critical edition. Amir Harrak and others have suggested to me that, in general, critical editions from a century ago need to be redone, but I leave this undertaking to those whose expertise and interest lies in that area.

[9] The exceptions to this rule include studies examining textual variants in Aphrahat's scriptural text, as well as the overall tendencies of each of

2. IDENTITY OF THE AUTHOR

The name 'Aphrahat' derives from a Persian root meaning 'wise' (cf. the modern 'Ferhad'), and was not uncommon.[10] Yet as the proper name of the author of the *Demonstrations* it only begins to appear in the 10th century, and is always associated with the title 'Persian Sage'. This title, on the other hand, is quite early, showing up in all the earliest manuscripts and references to the author. It may be that the proper name simply grew out of the generic title.

There is, however, another early tradition about the name of the author. In both the colophon and donation formula of manuscript *B*, written in 510, the author of the *Demonstrations* is identified as "Mar Jacob". Already in the 5th century, the Armenian translator of the work takes it to have been written by Jacob, bishop of Nisibis, which is certainly incorrect since the latter died in 337, before the *Demonstrations* were completed. Gennadius of Marseilles (late 5th century) makes the same erroneous association.[11] Pierre has suggested that the early identification with Jacob of Nisibis may contain a grain of truth: perhaps the author was in fact Jacob of *Nineveh*. She bases this on a supposed "predilection" of the author for Jonah and the Ninevites, as well as the possibility that 'Nineveh' may have been confused with 'Nisibis' among Western writers (more likely for Gennadius than for the Armenian translator). This remains firmly within the realm of speculation, however, as does the idea that 'Jacob' was a name adopted upon entering monastic life.[12] The evidence remains inconclusive, although as Pierre observes, the early attestation of 'Jacob' gives it some weight. For the

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the major manuscript traditions.

[10] For a discussion of the possible name of the author, see Pierre (1988, 33-41), who attempts to moderate the original skepticism of Wright about the authenticity of both 'Aphrahat' and 'Jacob'.

[11] The reference is found in his popular continuation of Jerome's *De Viris Illustribus*.

[12] This conjures up images of a monastic institution that almost certainly did not exist at the time in Persia. For another very early discussion of the name of the author, see the 1870 review of Wright's edition.

sake of covenience, I shall use the name that has become conventional.

Aphrahat has the distinction of being the earliest clear personality in the field of Syriac literature whose own work survives in its original language.[13] He lived in the Persian Empire, though his exact location remains a mystery. The scribe of the 14th century manuscript C identified our author as the "bishop of Mar Mattai," but this can hardly be taken as decisive, since monasticism as such did not exist at that time in the Syriac east.[14] Aphrahat knows of the conversion of Constantine to Christianity, yet shows no awareness (or at least no recognition) of the Council of Nicaea, which took place eleven years before he wrote the first installment of his *Demonstrations*. All that we can say with any certainty about Aphrahat must be gathered from the *Demonstrations* themselves.

It is quite clear from the tone of the work that he was in a position of some authority: he speaks as a master of the spiritual life, despite his claim that his writings represent the work of a mere "stone-mason" who supplies raw materials for the "wise architects" (i.e. 'shepherds' in a position of leadership over their flocks) to build up the Church (10.9). The counsel offered to 'shepherds' in Demonstration 10 indicates that our author saw himself as a leader among leaders. We can assume that these "wise architects" are not

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[13] A clear and succinct disscussion of early Syriac sources can be found in Murray (1982, 3-6). As Murray points out, the early 3rd century author Bardaisan is "the first clear personality in Syriac literature", but we have nothing from his own hand. The *Book of the Laws of Countries* (or *Dialogue on Fate*) sometimes ascribed to him was composed by Philip, one of his students. For a more detailed summary of early Syriac literature, see Brock (1997, 13-30), and Murray's own longer treatment (pp. 1-38) in the revised edition of his *Symbols of Church and Kingdom* (2004). Lucas van Rompay (2008) provides the most recent authoritative introduction to the Syriac tradition, up to the 6th century.

[14] Cf. the comment of Lane (1999, 232): "Attempts to give him a personal name (Jacob), and to give him a personal history (that he was a monk of the monastery of Mar Matta… and that he had the rank of bishop) are the result of late chonicling by which the Jacobite party claimed both author and monastery as their own."

the same people as the Church leaders criticized so severely in Demonstration 14! The fact that such a thorough criticism is presented is further proof of Aphrahat's standing in his faith community; some have suggested that he may have been a bishop, yet there is no direct evidence for such a claim. We need not assume that everyone with the exegetical and didactic skills (not to mention moral authority) of our author must have occupied an episcopal seat. The frequent use of "we" and "us" in Demonstration 14 nevertheless reflects Aphrahat's position as a leader of some importance: he claims to be speaking on behalf of many.

And yet that same Demonstration reveals a bitter conflict between Aphrahat on the one hand and the unnamed leader[15] of the Persian Church and his supporters on the other. This conflict prevents us from assuming that Demonstration 14 was written as some kind of official record of a general Persian synod. Rather, it represents the views of a significant group opposed to the behaviour of this leader, namely, the ascetic community that he represents:

> Because of what we have written to you, friends, you [now] know that it is as a result of greed that the handlers of the Law and the power among our people are envious and jealous, while our teaching matches our way of living. We walk contentiously because we have been instructed contentiously. With respect to the laying on of hands, the consecration which some among us have received, they struggle to achieve only what is necessary for it. It is rare in our times to find someone asking, 'Who is it that fears God?' Rather, [the question is], 'Who is the oldest for the laying on of hands?' And when they say, 'Such and such is the oldest,' they say to him, 'You may recline at the head of the table.' (14.25)

A contrast is set up between the behaviour of the "handlers of the Law" and "our way of living." When Aphrahat refers to "some among us" having received consecration, he may be indicating

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[15] The establishment of the identity of this figure is wrapped up with chronological considerations. See the scholars cited in n. 5, above. Most now accept the identification of this figure with Simeon bar Sabbae.

some of his fellow covenanters (ܒܢܝ ܩܝܡܐ),[16] or he may be using "us" to represent a larger group, in which case those consecrated for ministry may be the "handlers of the Law" just mentioned.

It is at the end of Demonstration 22, however, that Aphrahat provides the most detailed view of his own role within the Persian Church. There, he recognizes the limits of his own understanding, but is nevertheless able to say that what he has written "is not the thinking of one person, nor [is it] for the persuasion of one reader, but it is the thinking of the whole church, and [it is] for the persuasion of all the faithful" (22.26). He goes on to refer to other "sages" whose teaching may be different from his own, yet still worthy of respect.[17] What matters, in the end, is the compatibility of the teaching of any given sage with the wisdom of God as found in the scriptures. This wisdom is a "great treasury" which, at best, is merely sampled by any given teacher: "For even if a person's lifetime was as [long as] all the days of the world from Adam to the end of time, and if he sat and meditated on the holy scriptures, he would not understand all the meaning of the depth of the words." Thus, the oft-quoted self-designation "disciple of the holy scriptures", found in this section, remains the best description of Aphrahat's own perception of his role. What is being 'demonstrated' in the *Demonstrations* is the congruity of Aphrahat's arguments with the sacred text: a prominent characteristic of the work is the sheer number of biblical citations and allusions. As his extensive reliance on scripture partly illustrates, Aphrahat's theology predates the strong influence of Greek philosophical and mystical theology on the Syriac tradition which begins in the 5th century. Ephrem, a towering figure among Syriac authors from the next generation, and one who often overshadows our author in discus-

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[16] I use the term suggested by Nedungatt (1973, 203), echoing Vööbus (1958, 12-13). See the discussion of ascetic terminology below.

[17] Nedungatt (1980, 68) rightly summarizes Aphrahat's words here as "a brief enunciation of theological pluralism, sound and liberal, the like of which is hard to find elsewhere in ancient Christian literature."

sions of the early Syriac tradition, shows more awareness of Greek learning.[18]

If Aphrahat's position in the Church as an authoritative interpreter of the scriptures is clear from his writings, his background is less so. Was he born into the Christian community? Or was he an adult convert, perhaps from the dominant Persian culture or the vibrant Jewish subculture of Mesopotamia? Given the fact that he writes in an Aramaic dialect, and has such a detailed knowledge of the Jewish scriptures (in their Christian form!), a Persian ethnicity is unlikely.[19] On the other hand, there is obviously no need to jump to the conclusion that only a former Jew could have been so conversant with Jewish scripture. Followers of Christ had long before appropriated this for their own (diverse) purposes.

A number of passages suggest a non-Jewish origin for our author. In Demonstration 16.7 Aphrahat quotes Deuteronomy 32:21 as support for his statement that Jews are provoked by "us" Christians into not worshipping idols, since the Christians have abandoned idols and rejected that which their "fathers" left them. Here the Christians are clearly identified as non-Jews: the 'peoples' rather than the original Israelite/Jewish 'people'. In a similar vein, 17.8

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[18] Much important work remains to be done on the *differences* between Aphrahat and Ephrem, who are usually lumped together as the best representatives of Syriac Christianity before the thorough hellenization that began in the 5th century. The whole region, of course, had been hellenized long before, and there are elements in both authors that can be traced to Greek influence. Ute Possekel has shown that Ephrem, in his prose polemical works, made use of Greek philosophical concepts (see her *Evidence of Greek Philosophical Concepts in the Writings of Ephrem the Syrian*, CSCO 580, Lovain, 1999), but the same can hardly be said of Aphrahat. See also Murray (1983).

[19] The arguments that Valanovalickal advances (2005, 6) for Persian nationality are sound (if limited to a claim about geographic origin), but they do not prove Persian ethnicity. See Brock (1982, 12ff.) for a discussion of the inappropriateness of applying notions of national identity to ancient communities. He argues that religious identity was paramount. Asmussen (1983, 942) refers to an increase in Persian names among Christians in later centuries, but 'Aphrahat' predates this development.

contains a passage that speaks of the legitimacy of the Christians' worship of Jesus on the basis of the fact that it was he who turned their minds from the worship of "vain error" (i.e. idolatry) and taught them to worship the one true God. At the same time, Aphrahat attempts to undermine Jewish criticisms of the Christian honouring of Jesus, and again a contrast is set up between 'us' and 'them'. Marie-Joseph Pierre refers to a passage from Demonstration 16.1, in which Aphrahat claims Jacob as a forefather: "Our father Jacob testified concerning the peoples when he blessed Judah..." Her explanation, given in a footnote to her translation of this passage, is that Aphrahat is seeing Jacob as a father to the peoples (i.e. the Gentiles) insofar as he is heir to Abraham, the original father of the peoples.[20] In addition, there are many passages in which Aphrahat identifies Jews as holding a position contradicting God's will in some way (12.8, 11; 15.9; 16.8; 17.1, 12; 18.7, 12; 21.1, 5, 9; 23.47). Admittedly, none of this evidence precludes a Jewish birth for our author. It would not have been unprecedented for a Jewish convert to Christianity to distance himself from his former community. But one crucial passage remains: "Take note that I, from the peoples, have heard that the Messiah has come, so before his coming, I have already believed in him! Through him I worship the God of Israel" (Demonstration 17.10). Here two elements coincide: the author's explicit identification of himself as coming "from the peoples" (and not 'the people', i.e. the Jewish nation), and the claim to have begun to worship "the God of Israel." The latter phrase is rare in Aphrahat; the only other uses of it, outside of biblical quotations, are in a reference to the non-Israelite

[20] This is not the only passage where Aphrahat refers to an Old Testament figure as "our father" (see 1.16; 4.1; 4.5 [twice]; 4.9; 4.12; 8.7 [twice]; 9.13; 14.27; 16.1; 19.11). Of these twelve occurrences, five refer to Jacob, one to Isaac, and the rest are generic references to "fathers". There seems to be a natural tendency to identify in particular with Jacob, arguably the most important patriarch for the Jewish people. However, as Pierre indicates, this is not necessarily evidence that Aphrahat had a Jewish background, since his Church had obviously appropriated what was now seen as 'Old Testament' history as its own.

Gibeonites who had "taken refuge in the God of Israel" (14.36), and in a discussion of oaths in which Nebuchadnezzar and others are said to have sworn "by the God of Israel" (23.64-65). Demonstration 17.10, then, seems to be clear proof of Aphrahat's non-Jewish origin, and suggests that Syriac Christian communities had attracted Aramaic-speakers who were not Jewish, i.e. who would have identified themselves with 'the peoples' and not 'the people.'[21]

3. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

As a member of a religious minority, the external circumstances of Aphrahat's life were significantly shaped by the policies of the Persian government. In the year 224, over a century before Aphrahat began writing the *Demonstrations*, the beginning of the Sasanid dynasty marked a return to an ethnically Persian ruling class and the adoption of the ancient Zoroastrian faith as the preferred religion of the state. Prior to this, both the extensive Jewish community and the fledgling Christian churches experienced relative peace.[22] The Arsacid administration was probably hardly aware of the existence of Christians, their numbers being so small. Sasanian patronage of Zoroastrianism, however, made the persecution of Christians a possibility. This was a possibility that was realized only infrequently in the 3rd century. The fact that the Persian church was able to attain a high degree of internal organization by the early 4th century

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[21] On the opening page of his important 1971 study, Jacob Neusner reminds us of the complex social reality behind the meagre textual evidence available to us: "The Tigris-Euphrates valley, like the Balkans and Eastern Europe, was peopled by a multitude of ethnic groups. Christians were, moreover, acutely conscious that they constituted a new such ethnic group, 'the people which is of the peoples,' and Aphrahat repeatedly explained the new social entity formed by the disciples of the Messiah. Since a peculiar religion was part of the self-definition of each ethnic group, it was important to underline the fact that the Christians likewise constituted not merely a cult, but a true 'people'."

[22] We know little about the origins of Christianity in Persia. For a brief but informative discussion of the relevant evidence, see Asmussen (1983, 924-928). A more extensive treatment can be found in Jullien and Jullien (2002) and, in particular, Chaumont (1988).

testifies to a lack of any severe and sustained persecution. But clearly the Christian population was beginning to catch the attention of Sasanid rulers, particularly those with close ties to Zoroastrian religious circles.

In the end, however, it was not only religious differences with the Persian state that induced an intensification of Sasanid persecution of Christians. Constantine's support of Christianity and active involvement in the affairs of the Roman church had a major impact on Christians living in Persian territory. He is said to have written a letter to his Persian counterpart, Shapur II, expressing his concern for the well-being of Christians under the latter's rule, and issuing a thinly veiled threat of divine judgement on anyone who would disrupt this well-being.[23] Whether we trust Eusebius' account of this episode or not, the fact that there was now a Christian empire in the West made the situation of Christians in Persia more precarious. As it happens, the author of the *Demonstrations* found himself in the middle of the reign of perhaps the most anti-Christian of all Sasanid rulers, whose intense and long-term persecution of Christians was undoubtedly shaped by the fact that he was the first Persian ruler to try to come to terms with the new reality of a Christian Rome.

This persecution, however, did not begin until after the death of Constantine and the beginning of Shapur's long military campaign against Rome. Shapur's first move was to attack the border city of Nisibis in 337, but this attempt to take the city failed. Upon his return, he doubled the head-tax on all Christians, presumably to help finance the war with Rome. This was within a year after the first part of the *Demonstrations* was written (336-7). Assuming resistance to his reign generally on the part of Christians, Shapur then began a persecution that lasted for the rest of his reign, which ended in 379.[24] The rest of the *Demonstrations* were written in the

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[23] Brock (1982) uses this letter (or at least Eusebius' report of it) as an entry-point for his discussion of Christians in the Sasanian empire.

[24] The main sources for the reconstruction of these events, in addition to Aphrahat, include Sozomen's *Ecclesiastical History* (written ca. 450 CE), various 5th century Syriac martyr acts, and, to a lesser extent, the 6th cen-

early part of this period (343-5). Aphrahat may have been among the many martyrs under Shapur II, though this is not confirmed by any source.

It is hardly surprising, given this setting, that Aphrahat has little to say about the Persian state. We can safely assume that open criticism would have meant imprisonment at the very least. There is, however, a veiled criticism of Shapur in the fifth Demonstration, embedded in a long discussion of the prophecies of Daniel.[25] Constantine had clearly inspired certain hopes on the part of Christians in Persia, at least if Aphrahat can be taken as representative. Nor does he attack Zoroastrianism, though the discussion of natural phenomena as being submissive to God's will in 23.61 might have had this tradition at least partly in mind.[26]

The group that Aphrahat does have much to say about is the Jewish community of his region, particularly in the second installment of the *Demonstrations*. The fact that his attempts to counter Jewish arguments appear after the outbreak of persecution is surely significant. The same external factors that made Persian Christians natural enemies of the state made Persian Jews natural allies. The growth of anti-Jewish legislation under Constantine and his successors prompted some Jews to move into Persian territory, which was home to already significant Jewish communities dating back to the time of the Babylonian exile, nine centuries earlier. Since the Jewish community under Shapur II was in a much better position than Aphrahat's Christian community,[27] and since many Christians

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tury *Chronicle of Arbela*. See Burgess (1999, *Studies*, 251-256) for a thorough discussion.

[25] See the section on eschatology, below.

[26] For a few other possible references to Zorastrianism in the *Demonstrations*, see the "Introduction" of Bruns (1991), section V. 1.

[27] As Snaith (235-237) argues, a plausible explanation for the shift in focus toward Jewish issues in the second series of Demonstrations is the fact that Shapur II had initiated a persecution against the Christians, making conversion to Judaism more appealing. See also Pierre's detailed discussion of the political context within which Aphrahat wrote (1988, 71-93).

in Persia were probably converts from Judaism,[28] it is natural to assume that the temptation to return to Judaism would have been strong under persecution. The rather thorough attention that Aphrahat gives to various Jewish criticisms of Christianity is not, then, an academic exercise in polemics, but rather reflects the very real political and social situation of Jews and Christians in the author's milieu. His critique of Jewish belief and practice is meant not only to provide his readers ammunition in the ongoing debate between the two communities, but at the same time to reassure any who may be wavering that in rejecting the relative security of Judaism in this life for the absolute security of Christian salvation in the next, they have made the right choice.

4. APHRAHAT'S AUDIENCE

There has, in fact, been some debate over the intended readership of the *Demonstrations*. Was Aphrahat writing for fellow ascetics alone, or for a wider audience? The salient facts are as follows. Most of the Demonstrations are addressed to a single individual, whom Aphrahat identifies simply as his "friend" (the same individual, presumably, who is responsible for the request for instruction that prefaces the collection as a whole). In these demonstrations, no other addressees are mentioned. And as Demonstration 6.19-20 makes quite clear, this individual is, like the author, a "single one" committed to celibacy.

In a handful of Demonstrations, others besides this friend are addressed. Most conspicuous is Demonstration 14, whose intended audience, judging from the opening lines, seems to be the entire Persian Church, but whose real target is obviously the leadership of that Church. Another clear case of a targeted group occurs in Demonstration 6. Although it is still most often the single "friend" who is addressed here, we also encounter "brothers", "friends",

[28] This is a reasonable inference, given the widespread presence of Jews in Mesopotamia, the probable Jewish origins of the Syriac Old Testament (see note 35, below), and the evidence of Aphrahat himself, whose community seeks to define itself over and against the local Jewish community.

"single ones", and "virgins." Likewise, in Demonstration 10, in addition to his particular friend, Aphrahat speaks directly to the "shepherds" who watch over their believing "flocks" (more on this below). These same shepherds are also addressed in 7.26 and 14.39. A single instance of plural invocation occurs in Demonstration 23 ("brothers", in section 8), compared to six instances of the standard "friend."

Then there are cases where a wider audience, though not explicitly addressed, is not far in the background:

> [S]uppose you happen to go on a long journey and become thirsty in the heat, and [then] encounter one of the brothers… (4.15)

> [H]ear these things from me, and also discuss them with our brothers, the sons of our faith. (5.25)

> Read and learn, you and the brothers, covenanters and sons of our faith…These things [that I have written] are not enough, but hear them from me without disputation, and discuss them with brothers who are open to persuasion. (10.9)

> Since you have been persuaded, you can now persuade the brothers… (12.12)

> I have written to you, my friend, about virginity and holiness, because I heard a Jewish man who reproached one of our brothers, a member of our Church. (18.12)

Clearly it was Aphrahat's expectation that the teaching and counsel which he was providing his friend would also be passed on to others. Are these 'others' to be conceived of as the wider community of covenanters, or did our author hope to instruct non-ascetic individuals as well? Given the fact that a fellow covenanter is the main addressee throughout (with the exception of Demonstration 14, on which see below), it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Aphrahat's main goal is the instruction of the wider ascetic community. In the passages just quoted, the "brothers" who are mentioned are almost certainly in this category.

A key passage in the debate about readership occurs near the end of the tenth Demonstration: "I wrote to you above, my friend, to remind you about the disciplines that are appropriate for the whole flock. In this discourse, I have written to you concerning shepherds, the leaders of the flock" (10.7). George Nedungatt ar-

gued that, just as pastors are distinguished from the whole flock and are the subject of a separate treatise, so too the "covenanters" of Demonstration 6 are to be distinguished from "the whole flock." In support of this view, he cited the closing words of the sixth Demonstration: "Study what I have written to you: you and the brothers, the covenanters, who love virginity." This indicates, according to Nedungatt, that the sixth Demonstration is addressed "to a narrower reading public than the ensemble of the first ten treatises."[29] As further support for his view, Nedungatt referred to Demonstration 10.9, quoted above, interpreting the phrase "sons of our faith" (ܒܢܝ ܡܗܝܡܢܘܬܢ) as a reference to a wider reading public,[30] but this cannot be substantiated. There is a translation issue here, since it is possible to take "sons of our faith" as being another element in a series rather than in parallel with "covenanters"; I opt for the latter in my translation, for the following reason. This phrase is found only one other time, in the passage from Demonstration 5.25 quoted above. It seems unlikely that Aphrahat would recommend that his ascetic interlocutor seek the counsel of the ordinary believer. Rather, here, as in our other example, the "sons of our faith" are synonymous with "brothers" and (though not mentioned) "covenanters", i.e. the ascetic elite of Aphrahat's church. This is the "flock" of which the "shepherds" addressed in Demonstrations 7, 10 and 14 are guardians.

Another piece of evidence supports the view that Aphrahat's main audience was ascetic. When, in the 6th Demonstration, he lists the qualities that are appropriate for covenanters, he begins by mentioning faith, fasting, prayer, love, and humility, all of which are the topics of individual Demonstrations (1, 3, 4, 2, and 9 respectively). Though this does not prove that Aphrahat did not hope for or expect a wider audience, it does show that the topics he discusses were, in his opinion, of prime importance for covenanters, even if not found in the Demonstration that is named after them. This point is reinforced when we take into consideration the fact that the material in Demonstration 7, formally separate from Dem-

[29] Nedungatt (1973, 201)

[30] Bruns (1990, 38) makes the same claim.

onstration 6, deals almost exclusively with the issue of the breaking of ascetic vows.

The argument that Aphrahat speaks to ascetics only in the sixth Demonstration cannot stand. But are there Demonstrations that clearly go beyond the concerns of an ascetic subset of the Church? This is a difficult question to answer. Not all of the anti-Jewish polemic that dominates the later Demonstrations need have been the exclusive concern of covenanters. This does not change the fact, however, that throughout these Demonstrations as well, it is a fellow covenanter being addressed, and that Aphrahat's main concern is to help the "brothers" respond to Jewish criticisms. It is also clear that some among the covenanters were tempted by the Jewish option: "…[A]ny man who is [a member] of the covenant and [who] yearns for circumcision because of his licentiousness and lustfulness may be circumcized, but he does not understand what the apostle said…" (11.11).

It is less clear, however, that ascetics alone are addressed in Demonstration 20.

> I have written this brief reminder to you, my friend, concerning giving to the poor. I am encouraging and instructing those who give, that they might sow for themselves a seed of life… In these reminders I have exhorted each person who loves the poor. But I also address you, so that you might share in his work. (20.19)

Does not Aphrahat here give a general exhortation to all Christians on the care of the poor? In considering this question, we need to remember that no vow of poverty was required of covenanters. In the loose 'rule' found in Demonstration 8.6, Aphrahat says that the member of the covenant "should not demand interest when lending, nor should he love greed… When he is able to give to the poor, let him rejoice, but when he is not able, he should not be sad." We need not assume, therefore, that non-covenanters are being referred to in section 4 of Demonstration 20, where Aphrahat speaks of the spiritual benefits accruing to the almsgiver, who may even even "create an income for the poor from what he owns." Likewise, in section 17, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Job are all held up as rich men "for whom possessions mean[t] nothing compared to the fear of their God", and who made use of their wealth in acts of compassion and hospitality. And the opening lines

of Demonstration 20, which extol the "person of discernment" who "gives to the poor from the work of his hands, and not from the plundering of others," need not refer, either, to anyone outside of the ascetic community.[31] Unfortunately, Aphrahat does not tell us whether or not he is also addressing Christians with means who are not covenanters.

If Aphrahat intended his words to be heard and responded to by non-covenanters, the only unambiguous evidence for this is in Demonstrations 14 and 22. The corrupt leaders so fiercely castigated in Demonstration 14 are described (among many other negative characteristics) as foolish and wicked judges who condemn "the poor, the oppressed, and the holy covenant, many myriads" (section 7). As the opening line of Demonstration 18 makes clear, the phrase "holy covenant" refers, not surprisingly, to the covenanters themselves, and not the wider Church.[32] Throughout the course of Demonstration 14, both groups (covenanters and corrupt leaders) are directly addressed. In 14.17, for example, Aphrahat's "friends" are included in the category of those who "march along with work and weariness, vigils and intercession, fasting and prayer

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[31] By the middle of Demonstration 20, it is clear that the "person of discernment" who cares for the poor cannot, in Aphrahat's view, be a member of the Jewish community. This is ruled out by the fact that Jews "did not listen to Moses and the Prophets, and did not believe in Jesus, who rose from the realm of the dead" (20.12). Only the "priests of the people [from the peoples] and the holy covenant" can properly give the "poor and the oppressed" the "water" that they really need, which is the "teaching of the holy scriptures" (20.14). As Adam Becker (2002) has suggested, this may be part of a denial of the legitimacy of any support provided by Jewish synagogues, which some Christians may have been tempted to receive. It is also worth noting that one of the characteristics of the corrupt Christian leadership criticized in Demonstration 14 is a habit of exploiting the poor (see sections 3, 5, 7, 24, 26, 37). In three of the sections just mentioned, these same leaders are criticized for lending at interest (3, 26, 37). In contrast, the ideal leader provides for the poor (sections 14, 16, 33, 35).

[32] Cf. Demonstration 20.14, where priests are distinguished from the "holy covenant."

and mournful supplication…For we will not neglect the ministry of the Holy One." Furthermore, the language describing his readers in 14.38-39 is quite reminiscent of the language of Demonstrations 6 and 7, which are devoted to the ascetic life. Sections 26-29, in contrast, are a frontal attack on the legitimacy of the bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, who may or may not be a covenanter.

Likewise, at the end of Demonstration 22, a couple of passages point in a more general way to a wider reading audience:

> I have written these reminders for our brothers and our friends, members of the church of God, so that when they reach them in various places they might read them, and also remember my insignificance in their prayers, and know that I too am a sinner and unworthy. (22.25)

> I have written these things as I have understood them. If a person reads these discourses and finds words that do not agree with his thinking, he should not scoff at them, because what is written in these chapters is not the thinking of one person, nor [is it] for the persuasion of one reader, but it is the thinking of the whole Church, and [it is] for the persuasion of all the faithful. (22.26)

The language here is reminiscent of the sweeping address in the opening lines of Demonstration 14. Even so, it seems likely that "all the faithful" represent a distant third audience behind the primary audience of covenanters and the particular (secondary) target identified in Demonstration 14. Non-ascetic Christians who were not in leadership barely registered on Aphrahat's radar.[33] He may

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[33] They do show up occasionally, however. The mention of the avoidance of adultery in the list of beliefs and actions appropriate to the person of faith found in Demonstration 1.19 indicates that this section, at least, includes instruction for the laity (if such a term may be used in this context). Likewise, Demonstration 7.20 refers to the option of marriage before baptism. This cannot refer to those planning a 'spiritual' marriage, since Aphrahat disapproved of such arrangements (see 6.4-5). Cf. also 18.7, where marriage is described as a "harmful yoke". Aphrahat's retraction of this statement in the next section is hardly convincing.

have hoped that his words would have an impact on them, but if so, it would be through his other two audiences.

5. LITERARY SOURCES

Aphrahat recognizes no source apart from scripture, which he refers to with a variety of labels: "Law"[34]; "the Law and the Prophets" (2.1; 2.2 [three times]; 2.5 [twice]; 2.6; 2.7 [four times]; 2.11 [twice]; 2.20; 21.2) ; "scripture" (1.16; 4.18; 7.12; 9.1; 11.3; 11.6; 16.4; 17.10; 18.12; 19.12; 20.9; 20.14; 23.18); "scriptures" (3.13; 6.17; 7.10; 7.23 ["God's scriptures"]; 10.9; 14.32; 18.7; 23.53 ["your (i.e. God's) scriptures"); "holy scriptures" (1.20; 3.1; 14.19; 22.26 [three times]); "gospel" (1.10; 6.1 [twice, but here the reference seems to be to the message rather than a text]; 6.20; 12.9 [again, probably message rather than text]; 14.31; 20.10 [here the reference is to the Book of Acts]; 20.11; 22.18). The phrase "new testament" does occur (11.11; 12.6; 12.11), but the reference is not to a text but to the new spiritual relationship between God and God's people. In 22.26, however, there is a reference to "the holy scriptures (the former and the latter, in both testaments)", which implies that the phrase "new testament" could be used to refer to a part of the sacred text.

When considering Aphrahat's biblical citations and allusions, the reader should remember that these go back to Syriac versions, and thus will not always agree with modern translations based primarily on Greek and Hebrew versions. Robert Owens has confirmed the views of earlier scholars that Aphrahat's Old Testament was in the textual tradition of the Peshitta, the standardized Syriac Bible (Old and New Testaments) that was only just emerging in the 4th century.[35] Old Testament books not by Aphrahat include Oba-

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[34] This term has several different meanings in the *Demonstrations*. See Lehto (2006) for a discussion.

[35] One of the most important books for understanding the origins of Syriac Christianity, and one that sheds much light on Aphrahat's mindset, is Michael Weitzman's *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament* (1999). His reconstruction of the community behind the *Peshitta* points to a branch of Judaism that would have provided fertile ground for the spread of Christi-

diah, Song of Songs, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, and Nehemiah.[36] 1 and 2 Maccabees are clearly used, and there are a couple of possible references to Sirach and Tobit, though these latter examples may simply be well-known maxims, as with the possible allusions to the letter of James from the New Testament.[37] From the latter, Aphrahat makes no use of 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John, Jude, or Revelation. Lack of use, of course, does not prove that an author had no access to any given text, nor that he did not consider it canonical. We can probably safely assume, for example, that Obadiah and Ruth were, in fact, part of Aphrahat's canon, the latter particularly so since Ruth is mentioned several times. This cannot be assumed, however, in the case of the New Testament writings not used in the *Demonstrations*, since it is well known that many of them (particulary the non-Pauline writings) entered rather late into the Syriac canon.

Baarda, building on earlier studies by other scholars, has argued convincingly that Aphrahat used (some version of) the *Diates-*

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anity (in one of its varieties): "Conversion to Christianity would have made no great difference to their practice: it preserved their existing values of prayer, charity and faith in God, and it gave them a rationale for continuing to neglect the ritual demands of Judaism. Thus the community brought its biblical version into the church of the east" (260-1). This hypothesis assumes a situation (set in the second half of the 2nd century by Weitzman) in which the nascent Christian community in Syriac-speaking areas was still a live option for interested Jews: later centuries brought greater ideological and communal separation.

[36] For a detailed examination of Aphrahat's use of scripture, see Schwen (1907, 29-54).

[37] In an earlier publication (Lehto, 2004), I suggested that Aphrahat probably didn't know the letter of James, since he never quotes one of its chief emphases ("faith without works is dead"), even though it would have been quite useful for him given his emphasis on the proper observance of the Law. While I was perhaps a little over-confident in my assertion, it remains a fact that the three possible references to James in the *Demonstrations* could all be explained by the shared use of standard moral maxims (see notes 30 and 36 of Demonstration 6, and note 62 of Demonstration 9). Even so, we ought to question our ability to discern what an author saw as important in his or her sources.

saron, an early gospel harmony which was the standard text for Syriac Christians until it was replaced with the four separate canonical gospels in the course of the 4th and 5th centuries.[38] His conclusion, however, is very cautious: although Aphrahat seems to have used the *Diatessaron* mainly, we cannot rule out the possibility that he may have had copies of the Old Syriac gospels as well. The individual gospel writers are never mentioned, but neither does Aphrahat give titles for any other New Testament writings. Among the New Testament pseudepigrapha, 3 Corinthians seems to have been used on a couple of occasions.[39]

Robert Murray's brilliant survey, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, shows how Aphrahat develops certain themes that also appear in earlier Syriac sources. While the shared milieu is clear, actual dependence on these sources is not, with the exception of biblical material and, quite possibly, the *Didascalia*. Plooij (1913) tried to show a relationship between the *Odes of Solomon* and the *Demonstrations* on the basis of similarities in their respective accounts of Christ's descent into Hell, but this falls well short of a proof of literary dependence. Of the few extant works of Syrian provenance before the *Demonstrations*, none but the *Didascalia* exhibit the same preoccupation with Judaism. This work was originally written in Greek, but was translated into Syriac some time before Aphrahat wrote his *Demonstrations*.[40] It is in fact a Syriac manuscript which provides the only complete version of the text, though fragments survive in Greek, along with extensive Latin portions. Connolly first drew attention to the similarities between the *Demonstrations* and the *Didascalia* in his 1929 translation of the latter, though he did not edit the Syriac text. In his edition of the Syriac text, Vööbus (1979) dismisses Connolly's arguments without discussing them

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[38] Part of the evidence for this is the fact that Aphrahat always refers to 'the gospel', and never different gospels, as noted above.

[39] 6.12; 23.20. See Bucur (2008, 31).

[40] This assumes the validity of Connolly's argument that Aphrahat knew the document. If one doubts the connection with Aphrahat, then of course the Syriac translation of the *Didascalia* may be placed later than the *Demonstrations*.

(see pp. 27-29 of *CSCO* 402), but the evidence is probably stronger than he thinks, and deserves reconsideration.[41]

As for Western authors, no evidence of direct literary dependence exists. But this is not to say that Aphrahat does not share any themes and traditions of interpretation with earlier texts. Connolly (1905) suggested that our author may have been influenced by Origen. Gavin (1919) pointed to similarities with the christology of Irenaeus, and in his 1923 study pointed to similarities with the *Didache*. Likewise, Loofs (1930) argued that Aphrahat might have known Irenaeus in some form. Murray (1983) and Lona (1998) have reviewed certain parallels between passages in *Demonstration* 14 and 1 Clement. Kautt (1995) and Koltun-Fromm (1998) have compared the anti-Jewish polemic of Justin Martyr with that of the *Demonstrations*, following in the footsteps of Neusner (1971), who compared Aphrahat's arguments against Judaism with a wide range of earlier Greek and Latin authors. Bucer (2008) has highlighted similarities with the *Shepherd of Hermas* and Clement of Alexandria. The fact that the literary dependence of the *Demonstrations* on any of these earlier texts cannot be proven does not negate the value of trying to understand the currents of thought that may, in some form, have influenced Aphrahat.

6. RECEPTION OF THE TEXT

We are hard pressed to find quotations or references to the *Demonstrations* in later authors. Ancient translations were made into Armenian (late fifth century),[42] Ethiopian (Demonstrations 5 and 8,

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[41] Apart from minor similarities, three items stand out as evidence for a possible use of the *Didascalia* by Aphrahat: i) the presence or absence of the Spirit in a person due to his or her behaviour (cf. *Dem* 6:14-17 with *Did* 26 [244-248 in Connolly]); ii) the discussion of the 'three days and three nights' that Christ was 'with the dead' (cf. *Dem* 12.6-7 with *Did* 21 [181-182 in Connolly]); iii) references to the 'bonds' of the second law (cf. *Dem* 15.8 with *Did* 26 [and throughout]).

[42] Robert Thomson has informed me that the extent of the use of Aphrahat by Armenian authors "is still a question needing research" (personal communication, November 20, 2009). At least 35 manuscripts of

under the name of Jacob of Nisibis), Georgian (Demonstration 6 under the name of Hippolytus), and Arabic (fragments from Demonstrations 2, 3, 4, 6, and 9 under the name of Ephrem). Only one passage in the Ephrem corpus shows signs of being influenced by Aphrahat,[43] a clear indication that the *Demonstrations* were hardly considered essential reading in Ephrem's milieu a generation after their production. A text attributed to Isaac of Antioch[44] makes extensive use of the first and third Demonstrations, without citing its source.[45] A strong case can also be made with respect to Philoxenus, who, as Budge pointed out, seems to have drawn on the *Demonstrations* in his *Ascetic Discourses*.[46] In the late 6th or early 7th century, Abraham of Nathpar uses material from Demonstration 4 and 6.[47] Though later writers occasionally mention the author of the *Demonstrations*, few actual quotations of or references to the work occur in theological or spiritual writings after Abraham.[48]

In fact Aphrahat was sometimes criticized for not being sufficiently orthodox, as will become clear below when we consider his christology. This, along with a perception that the Persian Sage represented a primitive and unsophisticated faith,[49] may help to

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the *Demonstrations* are extant in Armenian, though none is older than the 15th century.

[43] See Brock (1997, 24); cf. Valavanolickal (p. 16, n. 53). The one clear parallel with Aphrahat is found in Ephrem's *Commentary on the Diatessaron*, 16.25, which draws on Demonstration 23.9. Yet as Brock observes, the *Commentary* may be partly the product of editing by one or more of Ephrem's students.

[44] The name 'Isaac of Antioch' is attached to a variety of texts written by a number of 'Isaacs' in the 5th and 6th century. See Brock (1997, 41-42).

[45] See Bruns' "Introduction" (1991, p. 43, n. 23)

[46] Budge (1894, lxxiii-lxxv). See Lehto (2004) for a discussion of how Philoxenus may have wanted to 'improve' Aphrahat.

[47] Brock (1979), 85.

[48] Bruns mentions the use of Aphrahat's discussion of the resurrection in 14th century Ethiopia, but admits that the extent of this use is hard to determine (*Aphrahat: Unterweisungen*, I: 35-36). He refers the reader to T. Baarda's 1981 article.

[49] Bogdan G. Bucer (2008, sections 6-10) conveniently summarizes

account for the general neglect of this text by later authors, a text that is now recognized as one of the most important in early Syriac literature.

7. MAJOR FEATURES OF THE TEXT

What follows should be seen as an invitation to the reader to explore the *Demonstrations*, since I have no intention of attempting to deal here with even most of the topics that appear in Aphrahat's work. It will be useful for the reader, however, to indicate what might reasonably be taken as significant themes or structuring principles across the work as a whole. Those looking for systematic theology or philosophical discourse in the *Demonstrations* will be disappointed. Nevertheless, the major concerns of the author are discernable. In this attempt to discern, I am aware of the words of the author himself, applied to the interpretation of the sacred text: "[E]ach person speaks to [his] audience based on what he understands" (22.26).

a) Organization of the *Demonstrations*

It can hardly be doubted that Aphrahat was attempting to achieve a certain coherence in the *Demonstrations* as a whole, even if this coherence may not be obvious to the modern reader. The first letter in each Demonstration contributes to an alphabetic acrostic which links them all together, with the twenty-third beginning the series over again. Moreover, at the ends of Demonstrations 10, 22, and 23, the author himself refers back to what he has already written. He assumes that his readers have access to all previous work.

In addition, some arrangement of the *Demonstrations* is evident. As already mentioned, most of the first ten are on topics relevant to the pursuit of the ascetic life, while many of *Demonstrations* 11-22 deal with issues in the Jewish-Christian debate. But even in these groups, other concerns surface, which makes it difficult to say that the entire work was planned out in advance. For example, if there

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perhaps the most famous dismissal of Aphrahat by a later Syriac author, that of George, Bishop of the Arabs.

was a link between Demonstrations 4 and 5 in Aphrahat's mind, he has certainly left the reader in the dark as to what it might be. His discussion of wars appears out of place in the middle of topics related to the practice of the ascetic life. Demonstration 8, on the resurrection of the dead, might also at first seem out of place, though it is probably intended to be linked to the preceding discussion of repentance, which ends on an eschatological note. Likewise, Demonstration 10, which focuses on those in leadership, follows a discussion of humility; perhaps this was Aphrahat's way of signalling that leaders in particular should embody this virtue. Explicit links between Demonstrations, justifying their order in terms of content, are absent, however. In the case of Demonstration 10, the author, we may reasonably assume, knew that he had reached a significant number in his acrostic series,[50] and may have felt that a discussion of leadership was an appropriate topic for the final Demonstration in that series. There is little indication that Aphrahat expected to write any more. The tone at the end of Demonstration 10 reflects a certain finality. The reference in section 8 to the first Demonstration may reflect the author's sense of having completed his project. The statement, "I have not reached the end of these words, but [have stopped] short of the end" (10.9) should not be interpreted as a plan to write more, but rather as an observation about the nature of biblical interpretation.

Perhaps the most glaring interruption of flow is Demonstration 14, set in the middle of a series of anti-Jewish arguments. On the other hand, it is clear that Demonstration 20, "On the Support of the Poor", should be seen as part of this series of arguments (from 11 to 21), rather than an intrusion. In a long discussion of the meaning of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), Aphrahat argues that Jews are represented by the rich man, while the poor man represents Christ, whom they rejected. Later, he applies Jesus' proclamation in Luke 6:24 ("Woe to you who are rich...") to Jews. Demonstration 22 mirrors Demonstration

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[50] Pierre (1988, 57) suggests that Aphrahat ended at ten to symbolize the fulfillment of the Ten Commandments in the person of Jesus, whose name begins with the 10th letter of the alphabet (yud).

10 by marking the end of a set of arguments. Its theme ("On Death and the End Times") follows naturally after that of Demonstration 21 ("On Persecution"), though anti-Jewish polemic now drops out of the picture. This leaves Demonstration 23, written separately in 345 CE, a year or so after the previous set. Its opening lines make clear that it was written in response to a set of new questions, about the preservation of God's blessing through the ages, the continual presence of the righteous in the world, and the reasons why the prayers of the righteous might not be answered. There is no need to see Demonstration 23 as an attempt to summarize all the rest, though many similar themes appear.

Given this arrangement of the *Demonstrations*, what can we say about the major concerns of the author? His initial concern is to give practical instruction on the ascetic Christian life, and for Aphrahat, nothing is more practical than faith. This practical orientation, faith in action, is central to the request for instruction that prefaces the *Demonstrations*. In the opening sections of the first Demonstration, Aphrahat addresses this 'request' with a metaphor: the life of faith is a house built on the foundation stone of Christ. This house, which is also a dwelling place for Christ, needs to be filled with all manner of items fit for his majesty. The list of characteristics of the faithful Christian life provided here is clearly oriented around ascetic observance (1.4). A number of these characteristics end up with their own Demonstrations: fasting, prayer, love, humility. Some others may be reasonably connected to other Demonstrations: virginity and holiness obviously map onto Demonstration 6, while mourning fits well with Demonstration 7.

But this still leaves a number of items that don't fit anywhere in particular: wisdom, hospitality, simplicity, perseverance, moderation, and purity. Some of these scarcely appear again in the *Demonstrations*, yet all of them, says Aphrahat, are "required" by Christ. In 1.19, another list appears, this time outlining a set of propositions about salvation history, followed by a further set of the actions of faith. In contrast to the earlier list of positive requirements in 1.4, here faith results in the avoidance of various errors: the teachings and rituals of Jews, pagans, and heretics; sexual immorality; and impure speech of various kinds. Again, some of these items are quite important in later discussions, while others are virtually ignored. Thus, while the practical orientation of the author is clear,

evidence that the *Demonstrations* were systematically planned out is not.

b) Faith in Action: Law and Temple in Aphrahat

Despite this structural looseness, it is surely significant that our author, after having begun years earlier with the theme of faith-in-action, returns to this same theme near the end of Demonstration 23, his last known work (see 23.62). Here the reader is once again reminded that true faith results in the doing of good and the avoidance of evil: in short, keeping God's commandments. An affirmation of the oneness of God is meaningless without this active component. And in between these opening and closing arguments, throughout the entire *Demonstrations*, the theme of following God's Law appears again and again.[51] It is, of course, a Christian version of the Law that is in view, yet the fact that Aphrahat habitually refers to the Law in a positive way marks his distance from Paul's approach to the same topic.[52] A commitment to understand and to follow God's Law fully leads to the ascetic life and to a critique of the Jewish faith, which, according to Aphrahat, has misunderstood the Law. One of the ironies of such a critique is that the basic moral stance held by our author has so much in common with Jewish moral teaching, and draws on many of the same traditions of scriptural interpretation.

Alexander Golitzin has recently argued that "[t]he inner and potentially celestial temple of the transformed human being might justly be advanced as the primary thrust of Aphrahat's entire program."[53] At first sight, this would seem to challenge the idea that

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[51] See Lehto (2006) for a study of this theme. Of particular importance is the way in which Aphrahat sees transgression of the Law at the root of all the troubles that his Church faces (14.37).

[52] See Taylor (1998) for an excellent discussion.

[53] Golitzin (2003, 307). The entire article is worth reading on the possible background of early Syriac spirituality, or at least the strand of it that appears in the major 4th century sources. That being said, care must be taken in using Macarius to illuminate Aphrahat beyond the cluster of themes that Golitzin identifies.

the observance of God's Law was of central concern to Aphrahat, but this is not the case. In fact, these are two sides of the same coin, as can be seen from the *Demonstrations* themselves. Observe the connection between the two in the following passage from Demonstration 6.17:

> For Christ lives in those who are peaceful and humble, and remains with those who tremble at his word, as He said in the prophet, "Whom do I watch over and in whom do I live, if not those who are peaceful and humble, and who tremble at my word?" [Isaiah 66:2] And our Lord said, "Whoever walks in my commands and keeps my love, we will come to him and make our home in him." If [Satan] hears that a person is on his guard and praying and meditating on the Law of his Lord day and night, then he turns away from him, because he knows that Christ is with him.

Trembling at God's word, walking in Christ's commands and meditating on his Law are signs of the presence of the Spirit, i.e. signs that the person in question has truly become a temple for his Lord.[54] Or consider the fundamental metaphor at the beginning of the *Demonstrations* as a whole (see 1.2-5), so programmatic for what is to come, that of faith as an edifice constructed on the foundation of Christ. Aphrahat takes obvious pleasure in explaining how Christ can be both the foundation for and the inhabitant of this edifice, but the important point is that the building needs to be prepared for Christ by a set of actions. The pursuit of these actions, I would argue, is equivalent to 'trembling at God's word' and requires 'meditating on God's Law'. In short, constructing the temple requires, or perhaps even consists in, observing the Law, under its moral/spiritual definition.[55] And to do this requires careful study of the scriptures, the texts which illustrate in diverse ways the righteousness that is at the heart of divine Law.

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[54] This same Isaiah prooftext is used in three other places, all to similar effect: 6.14; 9.1; 18.5. For other key passages on the theme of being filled with God's Spirit, see 1.3, 5; 6.14-17; 8.5; 23.47.

[55] See Lehto (2006) for a discussion of the importance of the concept of divine Law in the *Demonstrations*.

c) Use of Scripture

Some of the most interesting prose in the *Demonstrations* appears when Aphrahat is describing his approach to sacred text.[56] His inquiring friend had requested, "Open up for me the spiritual perceptions of your mind, and show me the things that you have understood from the holy scriptures…" In response, Aphrahat asks him to be open to instruction: "Listen, therefore, my friend, and open the inner eyes of your heart to me, and the spiritual perceptions of your mind to what I will say to you" (1.1). What the teacher has freely received from God must also be freely given. The scriptures, according to Aphrahat, are the means by which the inexhaustible supply of the wisdom of God is mediated to humanity, slaking the thirst and satisfying the hunger of those who recognize their spiritual need (10.8). He lays particular emphasis on the inability of any one interpreter, himself included, to have uttered the 'final word' on the words of God, which are "infinite and cannot be sealed… for the wealth of God cannot be calculated or limited" (5.25). Both the scriptures and the words of those who interpret them are to be received in a spirit of humility: there is a remarkably generous approach here[57] which stands in sharp contrast to the vicious theological debates that erupted among Syriac (and Greek) authors in the 5th century and following. Aphrahat's words at the end of Demonstration 22 are worth quoting at length:

> …If what I have written does not agree with the words of other authors, I say that these sages have spoken well, but it seemed [good] to me that I should speak in this way. If a person speaks and demonstrates to me on any topic, I will receive [instruction] from him without contention. Everyone who reads the holy scriptures (the former and the latter, in both testaments), and reads with an open mind, will learn and teach. But if he argues about things that he does not understand, his mind will not receive instruction. If he finds sayings that are difficult for him and he does not understand their meaning, let

[56] In particular, see the following passages: 5.25; 10.8-9; 22.26.

[57] Jeff Childers has highlighted this aspect of Aphrahat in a series of recent articles (2006, 2007, 2008).

> him say, 'What is written is written well, but I have not attained knowledge.' And if, about these sayings that are hard for him [to understand], he questions discerning sages who teach doctrine, and if ten sages speak to him in ten ways about one saying, let him accept what pleases him. And if nothing pleases him, he should not mock the sages, for the word of God resembles a pearl: no matter how you turn it, it appears beautiful.

It is this commitment to the scriptures and to the wisdom of God that animates them that is the engine that drives the *Demonstrations*.

As noted above, Aphrahat makes use of most of the books of the Hebrew Bible, though of course he knew it only in its Syriac version. A typical way in which scripture appears in the *Demonstrations* is as part of a string of testimonies supporting a particular point being made. There is, throughout, a certain oscillation between the author's voice and the voice of scripture, which is often condensed into whole sections of prooftexts. Every Demonstration includes at least some examples. But even outside of these densely packed prooftexts, references to scripture (either paraphrase or quotation) appear on every page.

Quotations, therefore, are frequent, but the reader should not expect exact or consistent quotations of scripture in the *Demonstrations*. As Robert Owens notes:

> The various biblical quotations occur within the body of [Aphrahat's] discourse; they are never isolated as distinct lemmata, *pesher* – fashion. Frequently they are introduced by a formula – usually 'as it is written' or 'as it says', rarely giving the name of the biblical book, but many times such formulae are not used and the biblical text simply forms a part of Aphrahat's own sentence... Aphrahat almost always quotes from memory... [T]here is the usual variety of casually paraphrased or abbreviated citations... [and] a tendency to mix together the texts of similar passages...[58]

In a careful study of Aprhahat's use of Daniel in the 5th Demonstration, Craig Morrison argues, in contrast to Owens, that the looseness of Aphrahat's quotations is not necessarily due to faulty

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[58] Owens (1989, 49-50).

memory, but rather because passages are being consciously adapted to suit the author's needs.[59] Likewise, J. C. McCullough has pointed out how Aphrahat selected biblical passages depending on his purpose, either polemical (primarily Old Testament, in its literal meaning, to counter Jewish arguments) or didactic (with a higher frequency of New Testament references and typological/allegorical interpretations, explaining the Christian life).[60]

Though Aphrahat's use of non-literal modes of interpretation is fairly restrained, the reader will encounter these often in the pages of the *Demonstrations*. As for all early Christians, it was of central importance to him that the entire scriptural record testify to the truth of his community's beliefs and practices. And in particular, it was important to show that the Old Testament pointed forward to the New. Peter Bruns says it well:

> Since Christ is the Messiah whom the prophets predicted, each aspect of Christian teaching and praxis has its precursor in the Old Testament. The hidden, saving power of God works in the anticipatory symbol of the Old Testament, realizing itself in the saving act of Christ, and continuing in the sacramental life of the church.[61]

The cross, to take just one example among many, is foreshadowed in the wood with which Moses sweetened the bitter water, and by his outstretched hands when defeating the Amelikites (3.11; 21.10). Likewise, the ladder that Jacob saw, and the staff he held in his hands, are taken as symbols of the cross (4.5-6). Dozens of similar examples fill the pages of the *Demonstrations*.[62]

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[59] Morrison (2004, 2008).

[60] McCullough (1990). This had already been noted in passing by Neusner (1971, 5). In a sense all of his polemic is really didactic, since it is unlikely that he expected any Jew to read his work; rather, he is teaching his ascetic flock how to respond to Jewish criticisms.

[61] Bruns (1991, 62; my translation).

[62] See Koster (2006) for a brief summary. Bruns (1990, 100-121) provides a thorough discussion of the types of Christ identified by Aphrahat in his Old Testament text. Besides cross and Christ, the third main theme of typological exegesis, according to Murray (2004, 41), and certainly ex-

In addition to the simple testimony list, or perhaps as particular kind of such lists, there is one literary form that Aphrahat returns to again and again: the list of examples. The fundamental study of this form is by Murray (1977), who identifies six categories: examples of prayer; of virtue; of those who were led into sin; of reversals of fortune; of the righteous who were persecuted; and finally a specialized category: the comparison series. The many instances listed by Murray are found, as he points out, in 13 of the 23 Demonstrations, and can be traced back, in their form and sometimes in their content, to earlier examples in Jewish, Christian, and even wider Near-Eastern literature.

d) Asceticism

Aphrahat's work shares its ascetic orientation with many other sources of Syrian provenance[63] (and indeed with much of early Christian literature). Though Aphrahat and his slightly younger contemporary Ephrem affirm the legitimacy of marriage as a form of Christian living, they themselves make it quite clear, as do most early Syriac sources, that their preference is for celibacy. Aphrahat's form of asceticism, shared with all of the covenanters, predates the appearance of cenobitical monasticism later in the 4th century in Syria, which was influenced by Egyptian models.[64] The titles of many of the first ten Demonstrations indicate some of the promi-

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emplified in Aphrahat, is the calling of "the people which is from the peoples." The volume just referred to, Murray's *Symbols of Church and Kingdom* (2nd edition), is essential reading for anyone who wishes to understand Aphrahat's use of scripture.

[63] In particular, the *Diatessaron*, the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Acts of Thomas*, and the *Odes of Solomon*, to mention only some of the more well-known earlier sources. See Caner (2002) for an excellent recent discussion.

[64] As Edmund Beck has said, "On ne trouve nulle part chez Aphraat la moindre indication que ces groupements d'ascètes se soient efforcés de manière ou d'autre de se séparer de la communauté chrétienne pour s'enfuir dans le désert ou dans les montagnes. Au contraire, l'idée de *bnay qyâmâ* montre précisément la connexion la plus étroite avec l'ordre sacramentel et hiérarchique" (1958a: 277).

nent virtues associated with the (ascetical) Christian life: faith (Demonstration 1), love (2), fasting (3), prayer (4), repentance (7), and humility (9). Though these, of course, are qualities that should characterize all believers, Aphrahat sees their development as taking place most effectively in the context of celibacy. Demonstration 6 deals extensively with the proper conduct of those who have taken ascetic vows: they need to take care not to grieve the Spirit of God.

What terms does our author use to denote those engaged in the ascetic life? This is a particularly important question given the fact that it is in Aphrahat that many of these terms appear for the first time in their technical sense. This is not to say, of course, that they were not in use before his time.

The term usually translated as "holy one" is quite frequent, but while the masculine singular *qaddišā* (ܩܕܝܫܐ) occurs eighty-one times, in only one instance is the term used to refer to the male ascetic (6.4). Most of the time the term is used to refer to God, the "Holy One". The masculine plural form *qaddiše* occurs twenty-eight times, but only four of these (6.6; 6.8; 7.20; 7.25) represent clear references to ascetics.[65] The feminine singular form *qaddišta* is used only four times in Aphrahat, three times in the phrase "Holy Spirit" and once as "consecration". Two of the occurrences of the phrase "Holy Spirit" occur in quotations, with 23.61 being the only place where Aphrahat himself chooses this construction. His preferred phrase is *rūḥ qūdšā* (ܪܘܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ; 18 occurrences). The fact that Aphrahat does not particularly reserve the term *qaddištha* to refer to God's Spirit indicates that its lack of use in reference to female ascetics is not for theological reasons. Likewise, the two occurrences of the feminine plural are not used to refer to ascetics.

The often-studied phrase *bnay qyāmā* (ܒܢܝ ܩܝܡܐ ; "covenanters") occurs just seven times (6.8; 6.20; 7.25; 10.9; 18:12; 22.25 [twice]), but the last three of these are merely references back to the sixth Demonstration and not part of any substantive discussion

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[65] In seven other cases (6.1 [four times]; 18.7; 22.12; 22.13) the reference is eschatological, referring to the community of holy ones who dwell with God.

of the ascetic life. There are also two occurrences of the masculine singular *bar qyāmā* (6.4; 6.7), and one of the feminine singular *bath qyāmā* (6.4, where I have translated "female covenanter"). There is no use of the feminine plural of this term.

It has become clear that the word *qyāmā* (ܩܝܡܐ) had a range of meanings in the early Syriac church. In a recent discussion,[66] Sidney Griffith attributes this range of meaning to the polyvalency of Semitic roots. He argues that Nedungatt, in translating *qyāmā* as 'covenant', "leaves unexplored the further connotations of the expression in Syriac." These connotations include "the resurrection idea that is never far below the surface when the root *q-y-m* is employed" as well as "the fact that a number of nouns derived from this root straightforwardly bespeak one's status of station in life in the church." However, in the ensuing discussion Griffith concedes that Aphrahat never explicitly makes a connection between the phrase *bnay/bnât qyâmâ* and resurrection, though it would be hard to deny that it remains an important background concept (since ascetics are said to have taken on the "image of angels" [6.1] and therefore anticipate the resurrection). Furthermore, Griffith's exploration of the idea of status or station in life draws exclusively from Ephrem, in contrast to Nedungatt, who limited his detailed analysis to Aphrahat. In the case of Aphrahat, we are dealing with a possible connotation of resurrection, not a denotation, though the distinction between these two is not always easy to determine. With respect to both of these connotations (resurrection and status) a case could be made for the logical priority of a term such as 'covenanters', since it is on the basis of their covenant of celibacy with God that certain people attain special status and acquire the image of angels.

Another well-known term used for ascetics is *iḥidāye* (ܝܚܝܕܝ ; "single ones"), which occurs only eight times (6.4; 6.6; 6.8 [twice]; 7.18; 7.19; 7.25; 8.23).[67] The masculine singular *iḥidāyā* occurs five times (6.4; 6.6; 23.52 [twice]; 23.53), but the last four of these are

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[66] Griffith (1995). For the quotations that follow, see pp. 230-231.

[67] The term is also used one other time, in 22.7, to refer to "only-begotten" children.

references to Christ, the "Only-Begotten One". The abstract form *iḥidāyuthā* ("singleness") occurs just once (6.4). Neither the feminine singular or plural of *iḥidāyā* occur.

This contrasts with the term "virgin(s)", which occurs more often in the feminine form. Curiously, Aphrahat never uses the feminine singular *bthultā* (ܒܬܘܠܬܐ) to refer to the female ascetic: the eleven occurrences of the term, most of them in biblical quotations, are either to Israel or Mary, the mother of Jesus. The feminine plural *bthulāthā*, however, is used eight times to refer to female ascetics (6.4; 6.6; 6.7; 7.20; 8.21; 8.22; 10.6; 14.16), while the masculine plural *bthule* is used three times (6.6 [twice]; 6.8). The masculine singular *bthulā* is used only once (3.1).

The fact that, in the whole of the *Demonstrations*, there is only a single occurrence of both *iḥidāyā* and *qaddišā* referring to the male ascetic should make us cautious about drawing conclusions from the lack of feminine forms. It is possible that Aphrahat simply happened not to use them. When he wants to refer to a mixed group of male and female ascetics, he uses the masculine plural, following standard Syriac usage. Thus when we see "holy ones" or "single ones" we ought not to assume, without further evidence, that female ascetics are not included in what these terms denote, just as "covenanters" can include both males and females (as 6.4 makes clear). Likewise, it seems probable that female ascetics are included in the masculine plural term "virgins" as it is used in the following passage from 6.6: "…paradise is promised to the blessed and the virgins and the holy ones. The fruit of the tree of life is given as food to the faithful, to the virgins and to those who do the will of God."

This is not to deny the fact that Aphrahat seems to have little interest in female asceticism beyond the influence it may have on male asceticism. In 6.8, for example, he makes a point of referring to "the *man* on whom the yoke is laid." Aphrahat's male-centred viewpoint is also reflected in a passage expressing his rejection of the celibate cohabitation of men and women: "This counsel that I give myself is good and proper and beautiful, as it is also for you, my friends, [who are] single ones (who do not take wives) and female virgins (who do not belong to husbands) and those who love holiness: even if a person encounters difficulty, it is proper and right and good that he [or she] should remain alone" (6.4). He could have used 'single ones' to cover both sexes, but instead 'fe-

male virgins' appear as a separate category. On the other hand, it is in this passage that the sole reference to a 'female covenanter' occurs, as noted earlier. As Naomi Koltun-Fromm has observed, in the *Demonstrations*, "There is no religious status for celibate women who have renounced their conjugal beds" (2000, 278, n. 8). Her conclusion that Aphrahat could not conceive of a female holy one, though not explicitly stated by the author, is supported by his statement that there is nothing 'female' about heaven (22.13), where 'female' seems to be associated with all that is deficient in human existence.

One thing that is clear is that Aphrahat distinguishes between virginity and holiness, as a passage from Demonstration 3.1 shows:

> There is the one who abstains from bread and water to the point of being hungry and thirsty, but there is also the one who abstains in order to be a virgin, and who has hunger but does not eat, and has thirst but does not drink; this fast is better. There is also the one who abstains through holiness, for this too is a fast…

Once we are open to the possibility that virginity and holiness are not synonyms for Aphrahat, other passages take on a new meaning. We can see, for example, a certain parallelism in the last part of the following lines:

> On account of this, it is fitting that those who sound the trumpets, the preachers of the church, should call and warn all those who have made a covenant with God in advance of baptism, those who have vowed themselves to virginity and holiness, young unmarried men and women, and holy ones. (7.20)

Here, "virginity" maps onto "young unmarried men and women" (*gadude wavtulâtha*) while "holiness" maps onto "holy ones". Returning to the passage from 6.4 quoted above, it becomes more clear that "holiness" is used to describe non-virginal celibacy, and that "those who love holiness" are to be distinguished from "single ones" (who are male) and "female virgins". This distinction between virginity and holiness is well-known from other Syriac sources.

While the distinction between virgins and holy ones is clear, the picture becomes less clear when the other terms for ascetics are included in the analysis.[68] The basic question is whether or not one, or the other, or both of the terms 'single ones' and 'covenanters' should be seen as synonyms for 'virgins', or as representing a larger category, including 'holy ones' as well. It is a question that is difficult to answer due to the limited number of relevant passages. My tentative conclusion is as follows. Aphrahat himself refers back to Demonstration six on three different occasions. In one of these, he refers to it as the "Demonstration on the single ones" (8.23), while in the other two it is called "the Demonstration on covenanters" (18.12) or "an exhortation to the covenanters" (22.25). This suggests that for Aphrahat, 'single one' and 'covenanter' denote the same category.[69]

Do the handful of crucial passages support this interpretation? Not surprisingly, the most important passage is from Demonstration 6:

> For this reason, my brothers, [if there is] any man who is a covenanter or a holy one who loves singleness yet wants a female covenanter ([who is] like him) to live with him, it would be better for him to take a wife openly and not become wild with lust. Likewise for the woman: if she does not wish to be separated from a single one, she should be [united] to the man openly. It is good for a woman to live with a woman, and a man ought to live with a man. Furthermore, if a man wishes to remain in holiness, his wife should not live with him, so that

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[68] Cf. Brock: "It is evident from various passages in Aphrahat that these *iḥidaye* have also undertaken a vow of chastity, although exactly how they are to be related to the *bnay qyama* and the *bthule* is not clear" (1992, 137).

[69] This point was also made by Nedungatt, whose 1974 study remains essential reading for anyone interested in the history of the term *qyama* in Syriac asceticism. He made the point, however, in order to argue that Aphrahat uses all four of the terms considered here ('covenanter', 'single one', 'virgin', and 'holy one') as synonymns, a position that I reject. Oddly enough, Negungatt also recognizes a distinction in the *Demonstrations* between 'holy ones' and 'virgins' (see pp. 211-212).

> he will not return to his former state and be considered an adulterer. This counsel that I give myself is good and proper and beautiful, as it is also for you, my friends, [who are] single ones (who do not take wives) and female virgins (who do not belong to husbands) and those who love holiness: even if a person encounters difficulty, it is proper and right and good that he [or she] should remain alone. [6.4]

Although the language is not as precise as we might wish, I would argue that we see in this passage not only the standard distinction between 'singleness' and 'holiness', but also the use of "covenanter" and "single one" as synonyms. The former is, admittedly, somewhat obscured by the fact that holy ones 'love singleness', but even that phrase could be taken as a mark of the difference between them. The phrase "a covenanter or a holy one" seems to make a clear distinction between two different cateogies; we may be justified in assuming that "single one", too, represents a different category from "holy one".

There are, then, probably three distinct cases envisioned in the passage just quoted. The first two involve either i) a male single one and a female covenanter or ii) a holy one and a female covenanter. While the idea of male and female virgins living together is by no means unique in early Christian literature, the possibility of a previously married male ascetic cohabiting with a female virgin who is not his wife is more surprising (though this can only be a tentative reading of the passage). Aphrahat repeats the first scenario (virginal cohabitation) from the woman's point of view ("Likewise for the woman...").[70] Then he outlines the third case, iii) that of a male holy one considering celibate cohabitation with his wife. By way of summary, at the end of the passage there are three distinct categories mentioned: single ones (i.e. male virgins), female virgins, and "those who love holiness".[71]

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[70] 6.7 is also devoted to the question of virginal cohabitation.

[71] I remain unconvinced by Nedungatt's argument (p. 205, note 1) that these categories can be collapsed by appealing to the use of an 'explicative waw' in such passages.

Two further passages, from Demonstrations 6 and 7, also point to an identity of meaning for "covenanter" and "single one". Before launching into a discussion of the proper manner of life for ascetics in 6.8, Aphrahat says, "Pay attention to what I am writing to you concerning what is appropriate for single ones (the covenanters, ([who are] virgins), and holy ones."[72] And in the opening lines of 7.25 he says, "I have written all these things to you, my friend, because it is in our generation that there are those who have vowed themselves to become single ones (covenanters) and holy ones."[73] It is surely significant that in both of these passages the phrase "and holy ones" occurs at the end of the list. It may have been that the 'holy one' was seen as a kind of honourary 'single one', and that the two categories remained distinct in the author's mind: after all, the latter are virgins, while the former are not.[74] This does not prevent him, however, from seeing both virgins and holy ones as part of the same overall ascetic group. What the passage from 7.25 just quoted implies, the opening lines of 7.20 make explicit: both virgins and married persons make a covenant with God when they embrace the ascetic life at baptism. This would make all ascetics 'covenanters' in a broader sense. But given the evidence surveyed above, there is room for both a narrow and a broad meaning for 'covenanter' in the *Demonstrations*. Yet while there is clearly a technical vocabulary denoting ascetics here, its use

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[72] ܟܬܒܬ ܠܟܘܢ ܥܠ ܟܠ ܡܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܕܒܬܘܠܐ ܘܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܕܒܬܘܠܐ ܘܩܕܝܫܐ . Here all four terms are piled up at the end of the sentence. I take the second and third as set in apposition to and explicative of the first, and the fourth as a separate category of persons.

[73] ܟܬܒܬ ܠܟ ܗܠܝܢ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܡܠܐ ܕܥܠ ܕܪܗܛ ܡܫܡ ܕܒܬܘܠܐ ܘܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܕܒܬܘܠܐ ܘܩܕܝܫܐ . As with the previous passage, in the group of three terms at the end of the passage I see the second term as explicative of the first, and the third as a separate category.

[74] Note the closing lines of Demonstration 6, which include the admonition to "love virginity, the heavenly portion, the fellowship of the watchers of heaven, for there is nothing that compares to it" (6.19). Aphrahat fails to mention holy ones in his final words (6.20).

is limited and has not yet developed the high profile or consistency that it will later acquire.

The ascetic terminology just reviewed has attracted much scholarly attention, focused mainly on the range of possible meanings for each term, and how these meanings might be connected to the self-understanding of the pre/proto-monastic ascetic community in Syria. There is no need to attempt a summary of this discussion here, when others have already done this effectively.[75] In the present translation, I have used Nedungatt's term 'covenanter' for the Syriac phrase *bnay qyāmā*, since the core meaning of that phrase still seems to be related to the act of taking a vow of celibacy, in which a person commits to the ascetic life. It may be that secondary meanings, such as a link with the idea of resurrection, or of one's 'standing' in the community of believers,[76] played a role in the minds of our author and his readers. One wants to be open to hearing these overtones when reading the *Demonstrations*, but without losing track of the more fundamental note.

In the case of the term *iḥidāyā* it is more difficult to assign a single, primary meaning. As noted above, the term, in its singular form, usually refers to Christ, the 'Single One' or 'Only-Begotten' of God. But to say that the term *iḥidāyā* (in its singular or plural form) had for its primary meaning "to be in a special relationship with Jesus Christ" is to go beyond the evidence of the *Demonstrations*, though not, perhaps, beyond the evidence of Ephrem.[77]

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[75] See Nedungatt (1973), Murray (1974, 2004), (Brock (1992, ch. 8), and Griffith (1993; 1995) for useful entry points into this discussion.

[76] It is noteworthy that Griffith fails to refer to any passage in Aphrahat where the theme of the *iḥidāyā* as "a type for his own people" occurs (see Griffith, 1995, 233-234). This is not to say that the idea would have been alien to the author of the *Demonstrations*.

[77] See Griffith (1995, 225), who goes on to say that, "In those texts in which Aphrahat and Ephraem speak of the 'singles' in God's service in the church, they seldom fail to make this connection explicitly." In fact, there is only one passage in the *Demonstrations* where this connection is made explicitly (6.6), out of a total of nine passages (eight with the plural, and one with the singular) in which the term is used of ascetics. It is also the case, however, that in three of these cases (6.4; 6.8 [twice, one of

Given its biblical use as a term for Christ, it is difficult to imagine Aphrahat and his readers *not* thinking of Christ when the term *iḥidāyā* was used to designate ascetics. The fact that very little is made of this connection in the *Demonstrations* may be simply because it was assumed by both author and audience. Yet we must keep in mind that the term in question occurs rather infrequently in the text to begin with. Other meanings that have been suggested for the term *iḥidāyā* include 'single-minded' and 'single' (i.e., not married). I suspect that the latter was the primary meaning in ordinary usage, simply because it would have reflected the actual social status of the person in question. Theological and psychological nuances of the term depend on this basic demarcation of a different social (and institutional) role.

In what context was this ascetic life lived out? It is incorrect to refer to Aphrahat and his readers as 'monks', since there were no 'monasteries' that we know of at this point in Persia, and the asceticism that had developed in the Syriac world by his day was indigenous, not indebted to any Egyptian models. Although there is an emphasis on living 'alone' (6.2, 4; 18.7, 11), nothing in the *Demonstrations* suggests that covenanters lived radically separated from the rest of society. Just the opposite is implied by the 'rule' in 6.8. Here we encounter exhortations to resist a luxurious lifestyle, to avoid impure speech, to not charge interest, and to give to the poor, all reflective of an urban social environment. Such imperatives can be given a monastic interpretation, but nothing of the sort appears in Aphrahat. But if they weren't living in monasteries, what were these covenanters doing?

The *Demonstrations* only hint at an answer to this question. Most of what we would like to know was assumed by both author and audience, and thus not explicitly mentioned. In the few Demonstrations where Aphrahat focusses on particular roles in the Christian community (7, 10, 14), he does not say that being a cov-

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which is quoted by Griffith]), a reference is made to taking on the yoke of Christ, though the term *iḥidāyā* is not used of the latter. Again, one does want to hear these overtones, but it is difficult to know how much weight to place on the fragmentary evidence.

enanter was a prerequisite.[78] In her discussion of the structure of the Persian Church as reflected in the *Demonstrations*, Pierre suggests two different ways of understanding the roles associated with the *bnay qyāmā*.[79] On the one hand, she says, it may be that clerics of all ranks, from the bishop to the lowly porter, were covenanters. This has the advantage, she points out, of explaining why covenanters are not specifically mentioned among other categories of leaders in the opening lines of Demonstration 14, and is supported by a similar tendency in the early 5th century *Rule* of Rabbula. Even so, it must be noted that this evidence does not, in fact, allow one to conclude that all clergy were necessarily covenanters, but only that covenanters could occupy various clerical positions. On the other hand, Pierre observes, there are sources which portray the *bnay qyāmā* as lay ascetics, i.e. as neither bishops, priests, nor deacons, but serving in subordinate clerical positions and assisting in the liturgy, in teaching, and in the practical administration of the Church. Obviously these two models contradict each other, yet we need not assume that only one could have been in place at any given time: in its early stages in particular, there would have been different tendencies in different parts of the Persian Church. Pierre does not resolve the contradiction with respect to the *Demonstrations* (nor, given the state of the evidence there, does it admit of a resolution). Her statement that *bnay qyāmā* "eventually" came to designate subordinate clergy stands in opposition to the observation that this class of subordinate clergy "must have existed well before Aphrahat's time."[80]

Although only moderate success is possible when attempting to define the precise meanings of the terms that Aphrahat uses to

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[78] The fact that the *Didascalia*, in the 3rd century, and various Persian Church councils in the 5th century did *not* affirm a requirement of clerical celibacy makes it unlikely that such a prerequisite was the norm in Aphrahat's day.

[79] Pierre (1988, 98-107). Due to lack of evidence, I leave aside the suggestion that, at some early stage, the terms 'covenanters' and 'believers' were synonyms.

[80] Pierre (1988, 100-101).

denote ascetics, let alone their particular roles in the community, we are on firmer ground when considering his descriptions of the ascetic life itself, if not in its institutional role then at least in its moral and spiritual qualities. Here no distinction is made between holy ones on the one hand and virgins/covenanters/single ones on the other (assuming that we accept that distinction in theory). And yet in the absence of any truly systematic discussion of the ascetic (i.e. true Christian) life in the *Demonstrations*, how does one begin to summarize such a rich body of material? Although Aphrahat is not systematic (at least not in the way we would perhaps like him to be), certain passages contain concentrated discussions of the kind of life expected of those on the higher path of ascetic renunciation.[81]

Due weight must be given to those early passages, mentioned above, which lay out that key metaphor in Aphrahat's description of the ideal Christian life, the building constructed by faith (1.4), which is held together with the beams of love (2.16). According to Aphrahat, faith is fundamental to everything, since it acknowledges the reality of the true foundation for meaningful living: God and his actions in the world (1.19). But these convictions about God need to be complemented by true love for God and neighbour (2.11). Faith leads a person to accept God's Law, and the Law leads them to love (2.7). This love is expressed in positive actions (1.4) as well as avoidances (1.19). Everything else that our author says about the ideal Christian life is predicated on this basic framework, and is intended to assist the reader in the task of embracing the true Law, which is to build a temple for God in the heart.

It is characteristic of Aphrahat that any discussion of ascetic practices is given an ethical/practical dimension. One gets the strong impression that these practices facilitate relationships with others, rather than merely developing the spiritual state of the individual. For example, when various kinds of abstinence are enumer-

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[81] My own (admittedly subjective) list would include the following sections: 1.4, 19; 2.7, 11-13, 15, 16; 3.1, 2, 8; 4.1, 10, 13-17; 6.1-4, 8-10, 14-17; 7.3-7, 17, 20-24; 9.2, 4, 9-14; 12.13; 14.14-17, 30-38; 20.1-7, 14-18; 22.6-10; 23.60-68.

ated at the beginning of Demonstration 3, the discussion quickly turns to the topic of "pure fasting", which represents not some perfect deprivation, but rather a purity of heart that scrupulously avoids evil. So strong is this ideal in Aphrahat's mind that he can easily read the stories of various patriarchs as examples of pure fasting when in fact there is typically no mention in the biblical text of any of the kinds of abstinence that have just been listed. Section 8 of the same Demonstration can be taken as emblematic of his overall attitude toward ascetic 'techniques': they are useful, but a more excellent beauty is found in the one who "also loosens the chains of impiety and cuts the bonds of deceit" in addition to (or perhaps as expressions of) humbling himself.

Likewise in Demonstration 4: it is purity of heart that makes prayer effective, a purity of heart that is expressed in "silence" and "a clear mind" (4.1).[82] A connection is made between silent prayer and inner purity. To close the mouth is to close the door to one's inner temple, thus, paradoxically, allowing Christ to enter "and purify it from every impurity, while the door... is closed." Upon reading some of the impassioned prayers in Demonstration 23, one realizes that for Aphrahat, not all situations called for silent prayer. For example: "We will give thanks with our mouths as much as possible to the Strong One who has come to give life to the weak. We will be diligent each day to speak praise through the beloved Son to the Father who sent him" (23.52). Inner purity must be reflected in outward relationships, otherwise the "offering" of prayer is "blemished." To pursue right relationships with others, whether it be in the form of reconciliation and forgiveness (4.13) or care for those in need (4.14-15) is to "[give] rest to the will of God" (4.14)[83]; doing the will of God, in fact, *is* prayer (4.16). It is significant that this emphasis on action is clearly laid out *before* the brief discussion of the various kinds of prayer in 4.17. The fact that

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[82] Sebastian Brock has noted that Aphrahat's discussion of prayer is the earliest extant example of a treatise on prayer whose main concern is not an interpretation of The Lord's Prayer (1987, 2)

[83] Cf. 13.13, where the same point is made in the context of a moral interpretation of Sabbath observance.

Aphrahat devotes an entire Demonstration to the topic of the support of the poor (20) further illustrates his fusion of ethics and asceticism. There is no theoretical discussion of the link between the two; it is simply taken for granted as part of the life of faith.

Thus the kind of asceticism that Aphrahat champions is never simply about the internal development of the individual: it leads, rather, to a way of living that creates harmony with others. If we ask, 'How does our author want his readers to live?', the answer will turn to such things as forgiveness (2.12, 13, 15, 17; 4.13; 14.44), the avoidance of dissension/strife (2.16; 6.8; 9.10; 14.30, 49) and its offspring jealousy/envy (2.16; 6.8; 9.2-4, 7-9; 14.13-14, 43, 49), and purity of speech (3.2; 6.8; 9.11-12; 23.2).[84] These qualities permeate what is often taken as Aphrahat's 'rule' or summary, at 6.8, of the ascetic's manner of life. In addition, he stipulates there that covenanters should be unadorned, moderate in their intake of food and drink, and should not charge interest. But these technical requirements mean little when taken outside of the context of the overall moral thrust of the passage, and of the *Demonstrations* as a whole. Of much greater importance is the humility that Christ modelled (6.9, 10; 7.16; 9.1-14; 14.11, 33; 20.14) and the love that he both modelled and commanded (2.1, 11-12, 16-20; 14.14, 44; 22.12). In 14.26 Aphrahat provides a critical description of the kind of church leader who *fails* to exemplify these important virtues. Such failure leads to conflict in the community of believers.

By way of contrast, the only legitimate conflict is the spiritual battle to which every ascetic is committed. Engaged in a constant

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[84] Marc Hirshman refers to a passage in the Tosefta in which speaking ill of another person is considered to be the worst kind of sin ("Torah in Rabbinic Thought: the Theology of Learning", *Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 4, The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period, p. 908, n. 30). It would be interesting to know how common this emphasis is across other rabbinic sources. It may represent yet another example of a shared religious culture between Aphrahat and his Jewish contemporaries, though, like the lone example of a 'rabbinic' food law discussed below, it hardly allows us to conclude that those contemporaries were readers of the Mishnah and Tosefta.

struggle with the Evil One, covenanters are the elite fighting units of the church, as described so evocatively in Demonstration 7. Spiritual footsoldiers are urged to have their wounds healed (i.e. their sins forgiven through repentance), and to avoid being wounded in the same place more than once, or risk being expelled from the army (7.3, 5-6). Physicians in this spiritual army are urged to receive and treat anyone who turns to them for help, and to maintain (to use a modern phrase) patient-doctor confidentiality (7.4, 11). The decision to enter into battle is clearly not required of all Christians (7.20), but must be undertaken with the utmost seriousness, as emphasized in the baptismal homily quoted in 7.18-22.[85]

e) Eschatology

This emphasis on spiritual warfare finds its natural home in a context of eschatological expectation, which pervades the whole of the *Demonstrations*. Ultimately, God is in contol of nature and history, and will bring all humans to judgement (2.18; 4.15; 6.10; 8.4; 13.2; 14.15, 17, 31, 35; 20.5, 12; 22.6, 11, 14-24; 23.2, 7, 13, 62-63). Not surprisingly, Demonstration 22 ("On Death and the End Times") contains the most sustained discussion of the last judgement. It contains some interesting features, including the idea that neither the very good (22.16) nor the very evil (22.17) will be judged. In addition, there is a spectrum of rewards and punishments for those in between these two extremes (22.18-24). Ascetics recognize the temporary nature of their present existence and all of its struggles (22.9), and in their way of life anticipate the life of heaven which is the goal of all Christians. Although Aphrahat does not often discuss the details of this future life (22.12-13 is the best example), its importance in the life of the ascetic community must not be overlooked. The Spirit that Christians receive at baptism as a pledge (6.1, 10), and that ascetics are particularly concerned to 'guard' and 'honour' and not 'grieve', will also bring them into the next life,

[85] See Murray (1974) for the classic study of this material from Demonstration 7, and Duncan (1945) for a general study of baptism in the *Demonstrations*.

after judgement (6.14-18): a recovery of the paradise that Adam had lost.

The precise manner in which this recovery will take place is a matter of some debate, Aphrahat acknowledges in Demonstration 8 ("On the Dead Coming to Life"). Here we catch a glimpse of an internal doctrinal controversy related to the nature of the resurrection. Those who limited the resurrection to "heavenly bodies and spiritual forms" are "foolish and without knowledge", says Aphrahat (8.1-2). The fact that human physical remains have turned to dust and mingled with other material presents no problem to the power of God. After presenting various prooftexts for the resurrection of the body from the Old Testament (8.6-12), Aphrahat considers the role of Christ. A good example of his style of exegesis follows. Why were two utterances by Ezekiel required to raise the dry bones to life? "This was so that perfection might be left for our Lord Jesus Christ," who is the "voice of God that will shout from on high and cause all the dead to rise up" with a single word (8.13, 15). Before that moment, the dead lie sleeping, receiving neither punishment nor reward (8.20). Yet they can be distinguished in two ways: the 'sleep' of the wicked is not pleasant, while the 'sleep' of the upright is (8.19), and the upright are remembered before the throne of God by the Spirit which had been living in them and which will return to them at the resurrection (8.23; in contrast to the wicked, who are "buried in a natural way").

When will the end come? Wisely, Aphrahat offers no predictions.[86] Even so, in his reflection on the war preparations taking place under Shapur II (see Demonstration 5), Aphrahat displays a confidence in the place of the Roman Empire (described as the descendants of Shem/Esau) in the divine plan for human history.[87] This confidence, of course, is based on his reading of scripture, in particular the Book of Daniel, an always fertile source of inspira-

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[86] The statement in 8.6 that the time for the earth to give birth to its dead "is at hand" seems to indicate that the resurrection was expected soon.

[87] For a thorough discussion of Aphrahat's view of Rome, and the chronological problems raised by Demonstration 5, see Inglebert (2001).

tion for Christian theological readings of history. Rome is taken to be the fourth beast of Daniel's vision, whose rule will not end, Aphrahat says, until the second coming of Christ, the "Son of Men", who will set up an eternal kingdom.[88] The "holy people" who are already part of this kingdom have been "set free", at least in principle, from any earthly authority: "the children of the kingdom have been marked, and they have received their liberation from this world" (5.23). What this liberation means in practice is not spelled out.[89] What is clear is that the now Christian empire of Rome is seen by Aphrahat as the unique "keeper of the kingdom" of Christ, to be handed over to him upon his return. Living in the heady days of Constantine's rule, Aphrahat, looking in from the outside but no less enthusiastic than many of his western counterparts, can hardly conceive of a military defeat for Christian Rome (5.24). A shadow of doubt about Roman military superiority is expressed in the closing lines of the Demonstration, but even if Persia conquers, our author reassures his readers, God is still in control of history, and will bring the end at the appointed time.[90]

f) Connections/Controversy with Judaism

Besides his aim of providing guidance in the area of ascetic living and the hope toward which it points, Aphrahat's other major concern was to help his readers understand how to respond to challenges from the Jewish community. In addition to various passages throughout the work as a whole, the majority of the final thirteen Demonstrations focus explicitly on these challenges, seeking to

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[88] Demonstration 5.6, 10, 14, 23. The phrase "Son of Men" (plural, not singular), occurs only in this Demonstration: twice in section 6, and once each in sections 21 and 23.

[89] It is instructive to compare this claim about the freedom of the "holy people" with the impassioned prayers uttered in the midst of persecution that we find in Demonstration 23.53-57.

[90] This same reassurance is the main theme of Demonstration 23, which affirms that history continues only because the righteous are in the world, and that even when they suffer, God has not forgotten his promises to his people.

show that the Jews have been rejected and that the Church has become God's chosen people, drawn from all the peoples of the world. Thus Aphrahat feels compelled to argue against circumcision (Demonstration 11), Sabbath (12) and Passover (13) observance, dietary laws (15), Jewish claims of election (16, 19), Jewish objections to Christ being the son of God (17) and to celibacy (18), and Jewish criticism of Christians based on the fact that they are persecuted (21). Demonstration 20, ostensibly on the topic of giving to the poor, is also preoccupied with the status of the Jews, as expressed in particular through an extended midrash on the parable of Lazarus and the rich man (20.7-12).

These anti-Jewish arguments were designed to reassure Christians, not to convert Jews. They reveal a situation in which Christians (and for Aphrahat, covenanters in particular) were tempted to think or act in ways defined by the parallel Jewish community. Above all, scripture was disputed turf. Our author needed to show his readers (and/or those they were in a position to influence) that the Jews' understanding of the sacred that text they claimed as their own was mistaken, and that if read correctly, this text in fact supported the (ascetic) Christian position. In the course of his arguments, Aphrahat attempts to convince his readers that various fundamental markers of Jewish identity (circumcision, Sabbath observance, and food laws) were in fact never intended by God to be a means of salvation for his people, but served a merely temporary and practical purpose. The saving power of God, he argues, is now at work in a new people of God, comprised of all who accept the correct interpretation of scripture and embrace a life of faithfulness to God and Christ, with all of the implications for action that this implies. The extent to which Aphrahat relies on a non-literal but very fine-grained reading of the Old Testament indicates both the degree to which that text was seen as authoritative among his readers and the potential attractiveness to those same readers of competing Jewish interpretations.

It should be noted, however, that the intensity of Aphrahat's arguments against Judaism, related, as pointed out previously, to the social and political context within which they occur, point more to similarities than to differences between the two communities. These similarities have long been noted, though their significance has been a matter of debate. Jacob Neusner's careful comparisons of the *Demonstrations* with contemporary rabbinic sources led him to

conclude that "the rabbis and Aphrahat lived in a single cultural continuum" but at the same time to deny any direct contact between them.[91] Neusner critized earlier scholars, such as Funk (1891), Ginzberg (1901), and Gavin (1923), for too readily assuming that such similarities meant that Aphrahat was directly influenced by rabbinic material. One of his main conclusions was that Aphrahat and contemporary rabbis were hardly aware of each other, if at all, and that this is reflected in their respective readings of scripture:

> The most striking result of our survey... is to discover that the rabbis simply did not interest themselves in the Scriptures that most interested Aphrahat. (Neusner, 1971: 168)
>
> Aphrahat and the rabbis had practically nothing in common, other than that they lived in a single cultural continuum and believed in the same revelation. But since that obviously was the case, it is consequential that they exhibited not so many parallels but so few. (ibid, 188)

What this suggests, according to Neusner, is that the Jewish community with which Aphrahat and his audience interacted was not significantly influenced by rabbinic authorities.

In the introduction to her French translation of the *Demonstrations*, and in copious footnotes throughout the text, Marie-Joseph Pierre sought to moderate this strong claim for a lack of contact between Aphrahat and a rabbinic form of Judaism.[92] Pierre agrees with Neusner in affirming "the total absence of any halakic interpretations in Aphrahat."[93] In a footnote appended to this state-

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[91] Neusner (1971, 155). His *Aphrahat and Judaism*, which includes a review of earlier scholarship and a comparison of Aphrahat with earlier Greek and Latin sources, remains a good starting point for an examination of the question of Aphrahat's relationship with the Jewish world.

[92] Likewise, Naomi Koltun-Fromm (2000, 375, n. 2) assumes that the Jews with whom Aphrahat is in conversation can be included in the 'rabbinic' category: "I assume that Aphrahat writes about rabbinic Jews, however diverse they may have been in the mid-fourth century. The Jewish literature I cite is all rabbinic, for lack of any other sources."

[93] Pierre (1988, 113); my translation

ment, however, Neusner's work is dismissed as superficial. Since this judgement is not defended in the footnote in question, the reader is left to deduce the reasons for it from the larger discussion. Much of what Pierre has to say about Aphrahat and the Jewish world is an elaboration of Neusner's observation, shared with other scholars, of a "single cultural continuum" between our author and his Jewish contemporaries. The debated issue revolves around how to understand the absence of rabbinic legal materials. Pierre's most basic point seems to be that 'rabbinic' should not be collapsed into 'legal', and that Aphrahat's participation in a shared culture, including his use of customs of scriptural interpretation and literary forms in common with contemporary rabbinic authors, as well as the presence of certain shared themes, makes it likely that there was some contact between rabbis of some sort and the Persian sage.

At one point, however, Pierre sets up an odd hypothetical counter-argument to her position:

> Aphrahat never alludes to any specifically rabbinic legal ruling, outside of the major laws fixed by scripture (circumcision or Sabbath, for example), which suggests that he had no real experience of a living and concrete Judaism, and that the Jews of whom he spoke served merely as a foil for his own doctrines. Perhaps Aphrahat never encountered any rabbi, and the controversy reported at the beginning of Demonstration 21 is purely rhetorical.[94]

But why should we be led to think that there was no contact with real Jews from a lack of rabbinic legal materials in the *Demonstrations*? The implicit assumption here, that 'Jewish' must mean 'rabbinic', is just as erroneous as the assumption that 'rabbinic' must mean 'legal'. Granted, Pierre introduces this as a hypothetical counter-argument, and it does not represent her own position. Even so, the hypothetical opposition might have been stated in a more nuanced way. The point being made is that the term 'rabbinic' should include 'customs of interpretation' and 'haggadah' in its meaning, not just 'halakha', or particular legal rulings. Clearly,

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[94] Pierre (1988, 119-120); my translation

there is a fundamental question here about the definition of this term. Just as calling all the early followers of Jesus 'Christians' may lead to an obscuring of their Jewishness, so too using the term 'rabbinic' to describe all of the Jewish-sounding elements in Aphrahat may obscure an autonomy from formal rabbinic authorities among the Jews that he encountered.

Michael Weitzman[95] has argued that the mention of prohibitions against gentile wine and food in Demonstration 15.2 point to a community that *was* conversant with rabbinic halakha, whom he contasts with those who had by this time converted to Christianity. I am not convinced, however, that this single passage proves that the Jewish community in Aphrahat's milieu was following rabbinic law. The reference to a prohibition of gentile wine and cooking appears incidentally in a discussion of Paul's views on food sacrificed to idols, which was an issue in the Christian movement long before any rabbinic source dealt with it. Aphrahat himself thus sees this as characteristic of "Israelites" in general at a time (i.e. contemporary with Paul) when there was no distinct rabbinic movement. We cannot rule out the possibility, however, that he is reading a rabbinic feature known to him from contemporary Jews into the Judaism of Paul's day. Indeed, a prohibition against wine tainted with idolatry is not mentioned by Paul at all. Yet to infer that Aphrahat's Jews were basically rabbinic seems to place far too much weight on this single passage. We simply don't know enough about how food laws might have developed in Jewish communities not strongly influenced by rabbinic law. And even if we take this passage as evidence of rabbinic influence, it remains puzzling that it is the only clear example of rabbinic halakha in the *Demonstrations*, one that is merely peripheral to Aphrahat's argument. It is possible that Aphrahat actually knew some of this legal material, but chose not to respond to it (for fear that it would mislead his readers), or that he knew his opponents were rabbis in the technical sense, but chose not to address them as such. Neither of these possibilities seems likely, and the absence of halakha in the *Demonstrations* can be better accounted for by the hypothesis that halakhic rulings

[95] Weitzmann (1999, 261).

were not part of the debate. After all, Aphrahat was explicitly attempting to assist his readers in their debates with Jewish interlocutors; if rabbinic legal arguments (of the sort known from contemporary rabbinic texts) were being brought forward, there should have been some trace of this in his work.

Even in the absence of halackic material in the *Demonstrations*, however, a strong family resemblance exists between Aphrahat and contemporary rabbis. We may point, once again, to the important passage at the very end of Demonstration 22. Aphrahat's articulation of the need to respect a diversity of opinion among Christian sages bears a striking resemblance to what some scholars consider to be the hallmark of rabbinic Judaism: its commitment to maintaining a broad discussion on issues of biblical interpretation and Jewish law in which dissident voices are not silenced, but the will of the majority is still honoured.[96] This overall approach to the task of interpreting and applying scripture is, perhaps, as strong a link to the rabbinic tradition as any particular exegesis in the *Demonstrations*.

A number of recent studies, following the lead of Pierre,[97] have likewise pointed to shared exegetical themes and/or strategies that strengthen the family resemblance between Aphrahat and rabbinic sources. In her doctoral dissertation and in a series of subsequent articles, Naomi Koltun-Fromm has demonstrated the existence of "analogous interpretive paths"[98] in the *Demonstrations* and contemporary rabbinic sources, showing that it is possible and instructive to reconstruct Jewish-Christian "conversations" on a wide range of issues. Time and again, Aphrahat's exegesis can be shown to be, if not a mirror image, then at least running at cross-purposes to arguments attributed to his rabbinic contemporaries. Jason Kalman reaches a similar conclusion in his analysis of the portrait of

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[96] For a recent discussion, see Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: 1999), 65-66.

[97] See her introduction to Aphrahat (1988, 122-128), where the utility of comparisons with Rava, a rabbinic contemporary, is defended.

[98] The phrase occurs in her 2000 article, p. 376. See also her articles published in 1997, 2001 and 2003.

Job in Aphrahat and Rava.[99] And David Levinsky, in his recent dissertation,[100] speaks of a "similar rhetorical technique being used for different purposes" (162), and points out that "becoming a member of the covenant has many similarities to rabbinic votive practice and the rabbinic understanding of the nazirite vow" (174). His argument, however, is very careful to avoid strong claims of direct influence or interaction between Aphrahat and rabbis, and makes use of the notion of "discursive contact" instead.[101]

Do these studies go beyond Neusner's "single cultural continuum and belie[f] in the same revelation"? They may be interpreted as more of a refinement of that observation than a fundamental challenge to it.[102] And yet it seems clear that the gap has, once again, narrowed between the author of the *Demonstrations* and rabbinic interpreters. It may be pointless to complain that the gap has not quite closed: if we can understand both Aphrahat and rabbinic sources better by comparing their discourse and showing a peculiar convergence of exegetical details, this may constitute a reasonable case for at least indirect contact. In this context, the lack of specifically halackic material in the *Demonstrations* becomes less important for establishing links between the two. Further study of the *Demonstrations* will no doubt reveal other areas of exegetical convergence.

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[99] Kalman (2006).

[100] Levinsky (2009).

[101] On p. 184, for example, Levinsky admits that it is difficult to say "with any precision" whether or not Aphrahat used earlier rabbinic material. Likewise, in a footnote on p. 234, he says, "Whether this interaction involves face-to-face contact, reading each other texts, or hearing the other's ideas second or third hand is quite difficult to determine with the limited evidence." The broad notion of "discursive contact" allows for a fruitful parallel reading of Aphrahat and contemporary figures like Abbaye without requiring any claims of direct contact (see the summary on pp. 190-191, and the comments on pp. 240-241).

[102] Cf. the following comment from Neusner's 1971 study: "Comparisons between [Aphrahat's] exegesis of Scriptures [sic] and those of Talmudic rabbis have not been fully explicated, for the parallels which Funk, Ginzberg, and Gavin noted do not exhaust the illuminating studies to be made."

In the course of such study, we need to keep in mind both our ignorance of Aphrahat's geographical location (i.e. was he in fact close to a centre of rabbinic activity?) and the difficulties of establishing the degree to which rabbinic authority may have penetrated the local community of Jews with which he interacted.[103] On the occasions when he directly addresses his Jewish opponent, Aphrahat identifies him as an interpreter of scripture, using terms such as "sage" (11.1; 12.7), "wise debater of the people" (12.3; 15.5), "scribe" (15.5), "stubborn scribe of the Law, teacher of the people" (15.8), "wise teacher of Israel" (17.9), "debater of Israel" (18.2; 19.2), and "teacher" (18.7).[104] We need not assume, however, that all Jews interested in the detailed interpretation of scripture were trained in the rabbinic movement.

Whether Aphrahat was interacting directly with 'rabbis' in some sense of the word or not, the *Demonstrations* are the work of an author whose community stands in a very close relationship with the more established Jewish community.[105] Aphrahat's fun-

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[103] As Isaiah Gafni has recently observed, "[T]he Babylonian Talmud often serves, not merely as the major source of information for talmudic Babylonia, but at times also as the only resource providing more than fleeting references to Jews between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers from the third to the seventh centuries CE. Consequently, historians of Babylonian Jewry must grapple, not only with the ahistorical nature of talmudic narrative passages, but also with the fact that the entire Babylonian Talmud corpus represents the ideas and thoughts of a rabbinic elite, clearly a small segment within the broader Jewish population" ("The political, social, and economic history of Babylonian Jewry, 224-638 CE", *Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 4 (2006), 793). Aphrahat is striking in his absence from both this chapter and the volume as a whole, appearing only once in a minor footnote.

[104] It is of interest to note that Aphrahat addresses his 'friend' as a "wise scribe" (22.11), and also uses the same phrase, mockingly, to address the bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (14.27). Likewise, the leaders who address baptismal candidates are described as "priests, scribes, and sages" (7.18).

[105] By contrast, elements from the dominant Persian culture are virtually absent: it is only from the standpoint of political geography that this is

damental scriptural orientation, forms of argument, and moral teaching would have been familiar ground to any Jewish reader of the text. The history of scholarship on the *Demonstrations* has revealed a wealth of traditions shared with the Jewish world. Aphrahat's only attempt to provide what might be taken as a creedal statement (1.19) includes much that would be acceptable to a Jewish audience. Indeed, one of his central claims (shared with the vast majority of his predecessors and contemporaries in the Graeco-Roman world) is that the Church is the authentic fulfillment of Judaism, or more precisely, of biblical Judaism. Frank Gavin put it well when he said that for Aphrahat, "Christianity was essentially the flowering of the plant Judaism. He could not conceive of the New Testament without the Old, - the Gospel without the Law: Fulfilment without Prophecy."[106]

g) Christology

One of the striking features of the *Demonstrations* is that Aphrahat's portrayal of Christ is so different than what one might expect from a 4th century Christian author, even as his anti-Jewish arguments are mostly conventional. Indeed, it can hardly be said that christology, in the usual 4th century (and later) philosophical mode, is among Aphrahat's major concerns. A brief discussion is warranted, nevertheless, since his christology has always attracted scholarly attention, and because it is directly related to his major concern of providing a defense against Jewish critiques. And it hardly needs saying that the figure of Christ is woven into the discussion throughout the *Demonstrations*.

A full survey of scholarship on Aphahat's christology is beyond the scope of this introduction. I will limit myself to a brief discussion of some of the more important recent contributors while adding a few comments of my own. Peter Bruns has produced the standard work in the field (1990); a careful reading of his work will amply repay anyone interested in this topic. Bruns rightly

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'Persian' Christianity.

[106] Gavin (1923, 127).

rejects the tendency of many earlier studies to find Nicene elements in Aphrahat's christology where in fact there are none. The aim, rather, should be to understand the *Demonstrations* in their own context, while at the same time avoiding romanticizing notions of a 'purely semitic' or 'semitically pure' Christianity in the early Syriac world.[107]

On a number of occasions (see pp. 87-92 in particular), Bruns reminds the reader that Aphrahat's interest is not directed toward abstract theology but rather concrete discipleship: his view of the nature and role of Christ is never separated from the practical moral and spiritual concerns of Christian living. Nowhere is this more true than in his discussion of the 'exchange of natures' between Christ and the believer (6.10-14). Here, as much as anywhere in the *Demonstrations*, the heart of Aphrahat's christology and spirituality is laid out: Christ leaves his "natural condition" with God and takes on a human body, taking that body with him when he returns to his Father and bestowing his Spirit[108] on the faithful, who guard this "pledge" until the final resurrection. Returning to this theme in his last Demonstration (23.11), Aphrahat spells out the implications of this exchange: it provides the basis for hope and assurance, since Christ, sent from God his Father in weak human form, defeated death and was raised to life:

> It was necessary for him to die in order to give us assurance that he died like us but [then] killed death and rose [again], and has caused us to rise and has promised that we will live. For if he had been heard when he wanted to avoid death, being

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[107] See Murray (1983) for a warning against such romanticizing notions.

[108] The capitalization of this term tends to imply a Nicene 'equality of three persons' in God, which is decidedly not the case in the *Demonstrations*. In the vast majority of cases, it is the Spirit "of Christ" that is referred to, though in a few passages we hear of "the Spirit of the Holy One" (11.7), "the Spirit of their Creator" (18.2), or simply "the Spirit of God" (1.9; 6.13, 16; 7.10; 22.26; 23.47). Even when Aphrahat speaks of the Spirit active in the prophets, we must keep in mind that this too is identified as the "Spirit of Christ" (6.12).

> clothed in a body, who would have confirmed the resurrection for us? He has strengthened us through his death and made us rejoice through his resurrection. He feared death, and in this [we know] that in his wisdom he made [himself] like us so that we might be assisted, and so that he might clearly show all people the weakness of the body which he put on like us. For if he had not been born like us, the road to death would not have been his, and if [a part] of his Spirit of life was not in us, he could not give us the assurance of life, that we would rise like him.

It is characteristic of our author that this important and concise soteriological discussion is not arrived at directly, but rather arises as an adjunct to another topic (in this case unanswered prayer: "if he had been heard…"). The passage nevertheless serves as a reminder that it is typically in the process of teaching about salvation and the life of the Spirit that Aphrahat conveys his views on the nature and role of Christ.

Another concise soteriological passage is found in Demonstration 14.31. Again, Aphrahat turns to the topic of salvation in the middle of a different topic: the need for Christians to work for peace and harmony among themselves. "For why did our Saviour have to die?", he asks, and the answer is that only Christ was able to defeat the Evil One and remove the curse of death from humanity. By willingly subjecting himself to violence, he does violence to evil and death, and becomes the promise of salvation for all who renounce violence:

> And because he endured all these things on our behalf, his Father *"gave him the name that is above all names, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, not only on earth but also in heaven,"* and while bowing and worshipping they will say *"'Jesus Christ is Lord,' to the glory of God his Father."* And he became the Judge and Lord of the dead and the living, as it is written in his gospel: *"The Father judges no one, but has given all judgement to his Son."* The reward of our Saviour for his suffering was this: a great and honourable name, for having pacified a rebellious region. Those who associate themselves with him and make peace and harmony become his brothers and sons of God.

What is reflected here is the pre-philosphical christology of Paul and the Gospel of John, with the goal of becoming brothers of Christ and sons of God in clear focus.

It is only in a few exceptional passages near the end of the final Demonstration that we encounter trinitarian formulas (23.60, 61, 63). Why Aphrahat felt the need to invoke these formulas only near the end of his work remains a mystery, but clearly they were not deemed important for his purposes in previous Demonstrations. Bruns is quite right to detect a "conspicuously theocentric bias" (94) in this material. A key passage from 23.52 clearly indicates the subordinate position of Christ:

> We rejoice in you, beloved infant, for you have prepared for us a path to the place of our desire. We give thanks to you, healer of our diseases, for you have hidden your Spirit in us, a remedy for our bodies. Through you we worship your Father, the Most High, who has raised us up in you and called us to be with him. Through you we give thanks to the one who sent you, who desired that we might live through the death of his Only-Begotten One. Through you we glorify the Self-Existent One, who separated you from his being and sent you to us. Through you we exalt the One who sits in his holiness, who has himself sanctified our bodies through the pledge that we have received. We will give thanks with our mouths as much as possible to the Strong One who has come to give life to the weak. We will be diligent each day to speak praise through the beloved Son to the Father who sent him.

The believer rejoices in and gives thanks to Christ, but only the Father, the Most High, the Self-Existent One, is worshipped, glorified, exalted, and praised, through the mediation of Christ. Elsewhere in the *Demonstrations* the same pattern holds: the reverence due to the one true God is not the same as that due to Christ. I make this statement not as a summary of what Aphrahat explicitly says (rarely do ancient texts tell us directly what we wish to know), but rather as an indication of an important distinction that appears in his language of worship.[109]

It might seem at first glance that Demonstration 17, which defends the worship of Christ as Son of God, mitigates against the

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[109] For further examples of "conspicuously theocentric" language of worship, see 2.20; 4.17; 5.16; 14.15, 39; 15.2; 18.4; 21.17, 19.

claim just made, but this is not the case. In fact, rather than weakening the trend toward theocentricity, Aphrahat's argument in that Demonstration actually strengthens it. His concern is to show that it is not strange that Christians call Christ 'son of God'. There are four parts to the argument. It begins with the observation that God has sanctioned the use of divine titles for human beings: Moses was called a 'god', Israel as a whole and Solomon were called 'son of God'. Kings and fathers are allowed those titles despite the fact that God is the only King and Father. The argument then shifts to anthropological considerations: humans are capable of various forms of exalted status because they have been designed for this. Insofar as humans come to a knowledge of their Creator, they become temples for the divine presence, receiving the Spirit and a knowledge of good and evil (17.7). The problem, of course, with these first two parts of the argument is that they imply that Christ was no more than any other righteous human being. The third plank in Aphrahat's argument is slightly more forceful: more than any other righteous human being, Jesus "turned our stubborn intellects from all our worship of vain error and informed us that we should worship and serve and minister to the one God, our Father and Creator" (17.8). The 'more than any other' is not explicit, but it seems implied by the logic of the passage. Bruns rightly calls this "a functional view of the divinity of Christ" (127). The fourth part of the argument is the elaboration of various proof-texts, bunched together as they usually are in the *Demonstrations* (17.9-10).

It would be a mistake to assume that the christology of Demonstration 17 represents Aphrahat's deepest views on the nature of Christ. Rather, what he has to say here, as he himself makes clear at the beginning and the end of the Demonstration, is written in response to Jewish critiques, and is perhaps also an attempt to address the needs of Jewish converts. A more robust account of Christ can be found elsewhere in the *Demonstrations*, as seen in the passage quoted at length above. Even so, the fact that an argument such as we find in Demonstration 17 was made at all is surely significant. It would be just as erroneous to assume that it is 'only' an attempt to respond to Jewish sympathies among his audience and to conclude that it tells us nothing about Aphrahat's real christology, of which it is in fact a part.

As interesting as it would be for Aphrahat's christology to extend only as far as the 17th Demonstration allows, scattered

throughout the rest of the work are clear indications that the figure of Christ is not to be thought of merely as an exemplar or teacher, though these remain part of the picture. Christ is identified as the Word (ܡܠܬܐ), Discourse (ܡܝܡܪܐ), Voice (ܩܠܐ) and Mouth (ܦܘܡܐ)[110] of God (1.10; 6.10; 8.15; 15.1, 8), actively preserving the seed of blessing throughout the history of Israel, and both foreshadowed and active in the major figures and events in that history. At the appointed time, God separated (ܦܪܫ) his Word from himself (23.53, as quoted above) and caused him to be born, die, and be resurrected in a human body, allowing the faithful to follow him in his conquest of death. As Bruns repeatedly makes clear in his careful analysis, however, nowhere in Aphrahat's discussion of Christ's nature and roles do we encounter anything comparable to the Nicene technical term 'hypostasis', or any statement of the eternal equality of Christ with the Father. In fact, what we find is a consistently subordinationist christology.[111]

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[110] References to the mouth of God occur throughout the *Demonstrations* (4.19*; 8.9, 10, 15*, 25; 13.9*, 11*; 14.45; 15.1, 8; 17.7; 19.3*; 21.2, 7*; 22.3; 23.7*; biblical quotation indicated by asterisk). The examples from Demonstration 15 are interesting, since there the same phrase, "mouth of the Holy One", in its only two occurrences in the work as a whole, is used to refer both to Christ and to Ezekiel, thus reinforcing the theme of Christ as prophet. In addition to these passages, mention of the Spirit speaking through the mouths of various prophets is not uncommon.

[111] William Petersen (1993) has argued that Aphrahat's christology is best understood as flowing from the Judaic Christian tradition of which both Justin and the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitiones* were a part, and which included a clearly subordinationist christology. While I hesitate to endorse the sharp line Petersen draws between 'Judaic' and 'Hellenistic' Christianity, and I reject the implied claim (see p. 250) that Justin (if we must choose) was not in the latter camp, Petersen's basic argument seems sound. His observation that Aphrahat was orthodox when viewed from this standpoint echoes the article on "Subordinationism" in the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (2nd ed.): "It is a characteristic tendency in much Christian teaching of the first three centuries…" In a closely related area, Bogdan Bucer (2008), drawing on Bruns and Cramer, speaks of the "subordination of Pneumatology to Christology". Building on earlier studies of Spirit Christology in early Christianity and in Aphrahat, Bucer ar-

To limit a discussion of Aphrahat's christology to what can be said in philosophical terms, however, is a mistake. However useful it may be for modern scholars as an analytical term, 'subordinationism' only captures one dimension of this area of Aphrahat's thought. Bruns' thorough treatment of the names of Christ in the *Demonstrations* illustrates the rich and varied stock of images that had come to be used to denote Christ in the Syriac tradition.[112] Aphrahat himself briefly reminds the reader of this wealth of names for Christ in section 11 of Demonstration 17. Indeed, it may be somewhat misleading to refer to Aphrahat's 'christology', as if the rich portrait of Christ that emerges in the *Demonstrations* could be collapsed into a neat theological formula.

If Aphrahat's depiction of Christ is archaic and primitive from the perspective of Nicene orthodoxy, it nevertheless preserves an important legacy from early Christian thought, and shows us a form of Christian thought that is just as vibrant (if not more so) than the more philosophical approach familiar in both East and West. In this respect, Aphrahat's portrait of Christ is indicative of the special place that the *Demonstrations* occupies not only in the history of Syriac Christianity but also in the Christian tradition as a whole.

8. THE PRESENT TRANSLATION

In general, I seek here to balance the requirements of fidelity to the original Syriac and a clear and accessible English style. I use square brackets to indicate where words or phrases have been added to produce a better English rendering. This includes, on occasion, the addition of proper names where mere pronouns are present (eg. "when [Isaiah] said" for "when he said") for the sake of clarity. I also use round brackets in those cases where it seems evident that Aphrahat himself is speaking parenthetically. Unwieldy sentences in Syriac are sometimes rendered as two sentences in English.

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gues that the angelomorphic description of the Spirit that we encounter in the *Demonstrations* is a part of Aphrahat's teaching about how the Spirit of Christ dwells in the believer.

[112] See Bruns (1990, 161-183).

Certain ubiquitous Syriac particles have been frequently ignored or represented by the same English word. Thus the particles ܒܬܪ , ܐܦ, and ܘ do not always elicit the standard "again", "also", and "and" respectively. I allow English stylistic considerations to control my translation of these particles, with the result that sometimes "furthermore" or "moreover" is used, and sometimes nothing at all is used. Of course, the simple ܘ has a wide range of uses and is certainly not limited to its most frequent use as "and". I have also decided to ignore another common feature of Syriac prose: the frequent use of ܐܡܪ ܘ . If a literal translation is redundant, I have omitted the phrase 'he said'. For example, if 'he proclaimed and said…' really means 'he proclaimed by saying…', then I opt for 'he proclaimed…', since there is only one action ('proclaiming') and not two ('proclaiming' and 'saying').

In the interests of English style, there are certain occasions where the same Syriac word is translated by different English words. For example, in 5.9 and 5.10, depending on the context, I use three English words ("earth", "world", and "land") to translate the single Syriac word *ar'ā* (ܐܪܥܐ). The term *rišā* (ܪܫܝܐ) is another example of a Syriac term that requires more than one English word, depending on the context. In 1.8 Aphrahat himself plays on this variability, using the same term to mean both "top" and "beginning", while in certain other passages the term is used to mean "leader" or "chief" (as in 11.12, where Abraham is described as the "leader of the faithful"). Likewise, though I have usually translated the term *tar'ā* (ܬܪܥܐ) as "gate" (eg. 4.5 "the gate of heaven"), in other cases I use the term "door" (4.10; "Pray to your Father in secret while the door is closed"). On the other hand, every effort has been made to avoid using the same English word to represent two different Syriac words, which would obscure potentially important distinctions being made by the author.

Scriptural quotations are italicized, according to a two-fold criteria: i) either they are introduced by an explicit formula (eg. "he said" or "it says"; this is Aphrahat's default mode), or, ii) the passages in question are of sufficient length that even in the absence of an introductory formula they seem to be actual quotations. Identifying quotations in the Demonstrations is a tricky business. As discussed above, Aphrahat often quotes from memory, or subtly adjusts the text to suit his purposes, and given his heavy reliance on scripture, it is not unusual for biblical phrases to appear throughout

his prose without any indication that an actual quotation is being made. Even where there is no explicit quotation, I footnote allusions or 'mini-quotations' to the biblical text. Biblical names are standardized to the New Revised Standard Version, and divine epithets capitalized.

Last, but certainly not least, I wish to express my gratitude to all previous translators of this text. Though I part company with them at times, they in turn have saved me from many errors. Furthermore, in many cases the English phrasing of previous translators is the best possible in my opinion; to opt for different wording merely for the sake of originality would be foolish. I stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before.

A REQUEST FOR INSTRUCTION

1. On account of the need that is in me to ask you, I am sending [my] inquiries and questions to you, my friend. Do not refuse my request. For many reasons, my mind has urged me to write to you.[1] Open up for me the spiritual perceptions of your mind, and show me the things that you have understood from the holy scriptures, so that my lack might be filled up by you, and my hunger satisfied by your teaching, and my thirst quenched by the fountain of your instruction. Though there are many [questions] in my mind that I want to ask you, they are all kept within me, so that when I come to you, you might explain every topic to me.

2. But more than anything this is what concerns me: I want you to write and explain our faith to me. How is it characterized? What is its foundation? How is it structured? Upon what is it established? How is it perfected and brought to completion? What actions are required by it? For I certainly believe that there is only one God, who made heaven and earth in the beginning. He decorated the world with the things that he had made, and he made humankind in his own image. It is he who accepted the offering of Abel, and took away Enoch because of his goodness. He protected Noah because of his uprightness, and chose Abraham because of his faith. He spoke with Moses because of his humility, and it was he

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[1] All but a few words from the opening lines have been lost in the Syriac text, but they are preserved in Armenian. Parisot salvaged the following: ܒܟ.....ܥܠܬܢ ܐ.....ܟܠ ….. ("For [many reasons, my min]d has urged me [to writ]e to you"). I am relying here on the translations by Bruns and Pierre.

who spoke through all the prophets. He also sent Christ to the world.[2] For this reason, my brother,[3] I am asking you to write to me and show me what actions are required for this faith of ours, so that you might set me at ease.

[2] A adds: "I believe that all of these statements are true, my brother."
[3] A: "my master"

DEMONSTRATION 1: *ON FAITH*

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II. TRANSLATION

1. I have received your letter, my friend, and when I read it I was overjoyed that you have thrown your mind into these investigations. For this request that you have made of me will be responded to freely, as it was freely received. Whoever has yet wishes to withhold from the one who seeks, that which he withholds will be taken from him. For whoever receives graciously should also give

graciously. Therefore, [with respect to] what you have asked me I will write to you, as far as my limited [mind] understands. And also that which you have not requested of me I will inquire of God[1] and explain[2] to you. Listen, therefore, my friend, and open the inner eyes of your heart to me, and the spiritual perceptions of your mind to what I will say to you.

2. Faith is composed of many things, and is built up in many ways.[3] For it resembles a building which is constructed through many actions as its edifice rises to the top. Be aware, my friend, that stones are laid as foundations for the building, and then on these stones the whole building rises up until it is finished. In the same way, the foundation of all faith[4] is the true stone, our Lord Jesus Christ. Faith is placed on the stone, and on faith the whole building rises up until it is completed. For the foundation is the beginning of the whole building. When a person draws near[5] to faith, he sets himself on the stone, which is our Lord Jesus Christ. And his building is not shaken by the waves nor harmed by the winds. It does not fall in storms, because its edifice went up upon the rock of the true stone.[6] In calling Christ 'the stone'[7] I do not

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[1] Thus, right at the beginning of his response to a request for instruction, Aphrahat makes known his reliance on the instruction he has received from God. This involves no doubt the same "spiritual perceptions" of the mind which Aphrahat exhorts his reader to open up. It is clear that Aphrahat has inherited many traditional exegetical techniques, but we must keep in mind that he sees himself as being actively taught by God.

[2] Syr. ܘܡܦܣܩ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ . The verb usually means "persuade" or "prove", and in some passages this is called for, but Aphrahat seems to use it most frequently in a less forceful way (thus "explain").

[3] The term ܓܘܢܐ can mean 'colour', 'hue', 'appearance', 'sort', 'kind'. The more neutral 'ways' seems to fit into the context better than 'colours'.

[4] A: " all our faith", or "our whole faith"

[5] ܐܬܩܪܒ can be either active/reflexive or passive in meaning; "be brought near" would be an alternative translation.

[6] Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6:44-49

[7] A adds "the foundation of the building"

[merely] speak from my own opinion, for the prophets who have gone before called him 'the stone.' I will make this clear to you.

3. Now hear [what I have to say] concerning the faith that is placed on the stone, and concerning the building that rises up on the stone. For first a person believes, and when he believes, he loves. When he loves, he hopes. When he hopes, he is justified. When he is justified, he is perfected. And when he is perfected, he is brought to completion.[8] When his whole building has risen up and been brought to completion and perfected, then he becomes a house and a temple and a dwelling place for Christ, as Jeremiah the prophet said, *"The temple of the Lord! The temple of the Lord! You are the temple of the Lord, if you make right your ways and your works."* [9] And again He said in the prophet, *"I will live in them and walk among them."* [10] The blessed apostle also said, *"You are the temple of God, and the Spirit of Christ lives in you."* [11] And our Lord also said to his disciples, *"You are in me and I am in you."* [12]

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[8] Cf. Romans 8:30. The reader is confronted with a perplexing series of verbs, which appear to describe different grades of spiritual maturity. Believing is said to come "first", whereas being "perfected" can only come at the end. We should not interpret "he is brought to completion" as a stage beyond perfection, but rather as an indication that perfection is the final state. The following line in fact makes clear the perfection and completion are synonyms. But we are left wondering whether or not these verbs are intended as a brief description of actual stages in the Christian life. If this is so, why is love portrayed as a second stage, rather than being associated with perfection, as it is, for example, in the *Book of Steps* and Philoxenus' *Ascetic Discourses*, among other sources?

[9] Jeremiah 7:4-5

[10] Leviticus 26:12

[11] 1Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 2Corinthians 6:16

[12] John 14:20

4. When the house has become suitable to live in,[13] then the person begins to be concerned about what is required for the One who is to live in the building. For example, if a king or a nobleman who is called by a royal name is going to live in the building, then it is necessary to have for the king all the things required for the business of the kingdom, as well as all the service that is required for the honour of the king. For the king will not stay in a house which is empty of all good things, nor will he live in it, for every adornment of the house is required for the king, and nothing [can be] lacking in it. If anything is lacking in the house in which the king lives, the keeper of the house is put to death, because he did not arrange service for the king.[14] Therefore, the person who has become a house and a dwelling place for Christ will investigate what must go into the house for the service of Christ, who lives in it, and how he might please him. For first he constructs his build-

[13] This phrase seems to indicate that there is a preliminary stage (when the house is a "suitable habitation", i.e. the structure is in place) before perfection is reached (when it is furnished for the king). This can be classified as one of the many cases where Aphrahat is less precise than we might wish. There is no indication that this apparent stage in the construction of faith corresponds in Aphrahat's mind with any actual spiritual state, especially since at that stage Christ does not yet live in the building (even though a person at that stage apparently has some kind of faith, since a structure is in place).

[14] This is somewhat shocking to read, but this little parable indicates the seriousness with which Aphrahat expects his readers to pursue Christian perfection. But does he really mean to say that "if anything is lacking" (i.e. any of the practices he goes on to mention), Christ will not take up residence in the believer? It is hard to avoid this conclusion. Twice at the end of section 4 Aphrahat reiterates his conviction that these things "are required", and he also adds that Christ "lives in people who are built up through these actions." We may wish to soften our interpretation by supposing that the criteria for the presence of Christ is not perfection but rather being involved in the process of being "built up." However, if this were the case we would expect the participle ("are being built up") rather than the perfect ("have been built up"). It is apparent that for Aphrahat, the presence of Christ is not something that can be taken for granted, and in fact seems to be something that could be lost quite easily.

ing on the stone, who is Christ. On the stone faith is placed, and through faith the whole building rises up. To make the house habitable [for Christ], pure fasting is required, which is established in faith. Pure prayer is also required, and it is received [by God] through faith. Love is also suitable for the house, and [love] is constructed through faith. Alms are also needed, and they are given through faith. He [the believer] also asks for humility, which is adorned through faith. He chooses for himself virginity, which is loved through faith. He brings near to himself holiness, which is implanted through faith. He also pays attention to wisdom, which is found through faith. He aims for hospitality, which abounds through faith. Simplicity is also required of him, and it is mixed with faith. He also seeks perseverance, which is perfected through faith. He is preoccupied with moderation, which is acquired through faith. He loves mourning,[15] which is manifested through faith. He also seeks purity, which is guarded by faith. All these things are required by the faith that is placed upon the rock[16] of the true stone, which is Christ. And these actions are required by Christ the King, who lives in people who are built up through these actions.

5. Perhaps you will say, 'If Christ is established as the foundation, how can Christ also live in the building when it is completed?' For the blessed apostle said both of these things. He said, *"I laid the foundation as a wise architect."* [17] And there [in the same passage] he defined the foundation and made clear [what he meant]. For he spoke as follows: *"No person is able to establish another foundation besides*

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[15] Cf. Ecclesiastes 7:2-3

[16] Syr. ܥܡܟ , which is probably understood as an allusion to ܝܥܡܕ ("Jesus").

[17] 1Corinthians 3:10. The Syriac word used here for "architect" is ܐܕܝܪ, which is also the Peshitta reading. According to Payne Smith, this term is often associated with Paul in the Syriac tradition. In the next section Aphrahat uses the more neutral term ܚܢܟ to refer to the Jewish leaders who reject Christ.

this one that has been established, which is Jesus Christ." [18] And again, concerning Christ living in the building, this is the word that was written above, from Jeremiah, who calls people "temples" and [says that] God lives in them. And the apostle said, *"The Spirit of Christ lives in you."* [19] And our Lord said, *"I and my Father are one."* [20] Therefore, the saying that Christ lives in those who believe in him is fulfilled, and he is [also] the foundation upon whom the whole building rises up.

6. I now return to my previous statement, that Christ is called 'the stone' in the prophets. For in ancient times David said of him: *"The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the building."* [21] And how did the builders reject this stone which is Christ? They rejected him before Pilate and said, *"This [man] will not be king over us!"* [22] Likewise in that parable that our Lord spoke: *"A nobleman went [away] to accept the kingship and to return and rule over them, but they sent envoys after him and they said, 'This [man] will not be king over us!'"* [23] In these [ways] they rejected the stone which is Christ. And how did [this stone] become the head of the building? It rose up over the building of the peoples, and on it their whole building [also] rose up. And who are the builders? [They are] the priests and the Pharisees, who have not constructed a solid building, but who were breaking down what he was building, as it is written in the prophet Ezekiel: *"He was building a partition wall, but they were hitting it so that it would fall."* [24] And again it is written: *"I looked for a man repairing the fence, and standing in the gap over the face of the land so that I might not destroy it, but I did not find [him]."* [25] Isaiah also prophesied concerning this stone. For he said, *"Thus says the Lord: I am laying a tested stone in*

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[18] 1Corinthians 3:11
[19] 1Corinthians 3:16
[20] John 10:30
[21] Psalm 118:22
[22] John 19:15
[23] Luke 19:13-14
[24] Ezekiel 13:10
[25] Ezekiel 22:30

Zion, in a corner of importance, [at] the top of the wall of the foundation." [26] And there [in the same passage] he said, *"All who trust in it will not fear,*[27] *but all who fall upon that stone will be broken, and all upon whom it falls will be crushed."* [28] For the people of the house of Israel have fallen upon him, and he became their destruction forever. And he will also fall on the image and crush it. But the peoples have trusted in him and do not fear.

7. With respect to the stone, he has shown that it has been placed as the capstone of the wall and as the foundation. But if that stone was placed as the foundation, how could it also become the capstone of the wall? When our Lord came, he placed his faith[29] in the earth like a foundation, and he rose above[30] all the heavens like the capstone of a wall, and the whole building was completed with stones from below and from above. And concerning the faith which I said he laid in the earth, David announced this in advance concerning Christ. For he said, *"Faith will proceed from the earth."* And

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[26] Isaiah 28:16

[27] Isaiah 28:16

[28] Matthew 21:44; Luke 20:18

[29] The reference here and elsewhere to the "faith of Christ" could be to faith in himself engendered in others, or to 'the Christian faith' as a set of propositions and attitudes, or to his own faith, i.e. his own obedience to God.

[30] This scarcely veiled reference to the burial and acension of Christ indicates that, in Aphrahat's view, Christ functions as foundation and capstone because of his death and resurrection. In section 8, this same "faith of Christ" is said to have filled the whole earth, as predicted by both Daniel and David. Furthermore, a prophecy from Zechariah which Aphrahat relates to Christ as capstone indicates not only the unity of Christ with his Father, but also the essence of the Christian movement reflected in Christ's command of love. The spreading of Christ's faith on the earth has to do with the growth of the community that lives by this command. But on an even deeper level, when Aphrahat thinks of Christ as capstone, he thinks of his role as head of a community that has received the love of God as expressed in his own self-giving through death, as the end of section 8 makes clear.

again, with respect to what is above, he said, *"Righteousness will look down from heaven."* [31]

8. Daniel also spoke concerning this stone which is Christ. For he said, *"The stone was cut from the mountain, without hands, and it struck the image, and the whole earth was filled with it."* [32] Thus he showed beforehand that the whole earth would be filled with Christ. For by the faith of Christ all the ends of the earth are filled, as David said, *"The message of the good news of the Messiah has gone out into all the earth."* [33] And when [Christ] sent out his apostles, he spoke as follows to them: *"Go out and make disciples of* [34] *all peoples, and they will believe in me."* [35] Zechariah the prophet also prophesied about that stone which is Christ. For he said, *"I saw a top stone of equality and grace."* [36] Why did he say "top", if not because from the beginning[37] [Christ] was with his Father? And [Zechariah] spoke of grace because when [Christ] came to the world, he spoke to his disciples as follows: *"This is my commandment: you should love one another."* [38] He also said, *"I have called you my friends."* [39] And the blessed apostle said, *"God loved us with the love of his Son. To be sure, Christ loved us and gave himself up for us."* [40]

9. He clearly showed concerning the stone: *"Take notice! On this stone I am opening seven eyes."* [41] What are the seven eyes that are opened on the stone, if not the Spirit of God which remained on

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[31] Psalm 85:11

[32] Daniel 2:34-35

[33] Psalm 19:4

[34] A: "preach to"

[35] Matthew 28:19

[36] Zechariah 4:7 (very different from the Hebrew)

[37] The same Syriac word (ܪܫܝܬܐ) can mean "top" or "beginning".

[38] John 15:12. "Grace" and the verb "love" used here have the same root in Syriac (ܚܢܢ).

[39] John 20:15. "Friends" also has the same root as the verb "love".

[40] Ephesians 2:4-5; 5:2

[41] Zechariah 3:9

Christ with seven operations? As Isaiah the prophet said, *"The Spirit of God will rest and remain on him, [a Spirit] of wisdom and understanding, intellect and courage, knowledge and the fear of the Lord."* [42] These are the seven eyes which were opened on the stone, and these are the seven eyes of the Lord which look down on the whole earth.[43]

10. The following was also spoken concerning Christ. Isaiah the prophet said that he was given as a light to all peoples: *"I have given you [as] a light to all peoples, so that you might be my salvation to the ends of the earth."* [44] David also said, *"Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my paths."* [45] The Word and the Discourse of the Lord is Christ, as it is written at the beginning of the Gospel of our Lifegiver: *"In the beginning was the Word."* [46] And concerning the light, there also he testified: *"That light was shining in the darkness, but the darkness did not understand it."* [47] What does it mean that the light was shining in the darkness but the darkness did not understand it? Christ shone his light in the midst of the people of Israel, but the people of Israel did not understand the light of Christ, in that they did not believe in him. As it is written, *"He came to his own but his own did not receive him."* [48] Our Lord Jesus also called them "darkness." For He said to his disciples, *"Whatever I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light,"* [49] namely, let your light shine for the peoples. For they have received the light of Christ, who is a light to the peoples. He also said to his apostles, *"You are the light of the world."* [50] And again, He said to them, *"Let your light shine before people, so that they will see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."* [51] He also showed that he himself is

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[42] Isaiah 11:1-2
[43] Zechariah 4:10
[44] Isaiah 49:6
[45] Psalm 119:105
[46] John 1:1. The *Diatessaron* opens with the prologue of the Gospel of John.
[47] John 1:5
[48] John 1:11
[49] Matthew 10:27
[50] Matthew 5:14
[51] Matthew 5:16

the light, for He said to his disciples, *"Walk while the light is with you, before the darkness overtakes you."* [52] He also said to them, *"Believe in the light in order to become children of the light."* [53] He also said, *"I am the light of the world."* [54] And again, He said, *"No person lights a lamp and places it under a bushel or under a bed, or sets it in a hidden place. Rather, he puts it on a lampstand, so that everyone can see the light of the lamp."* [55] The shining lamp is Christ, as David said, *"Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my paths."* [56]

11. Furthermore, the prophet Hosea said, *"Light a lamp for yourselves and seek the Lord."* [57] And our Lord Jesus Christ said, *"What woman who has ten coins and loses one of them will not light a lamp and sweep the house and look for the coin that she has lost?"* [58] Who is this woman, if not the assembly of the house of Israel, which was given ten commandments? They lost the first commandment, in which [God] admonished them, *"I am the Lord your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt."* [59] When they had lost this first commandment, they were not able to keep the nine which followed it.[60] For it was impossible for them to keep the nine commandments while they were worshipping Baal.[61] They lost the first commandment like the woman who lost one coin among ten.[62] The prophet called out to

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[52] John 12:35
[53] John 12:36
[54] John 8:12
[55] Matthew 5:5
[56] Psalm 119:105
[57] Hosea 10:12
[58] Luke 15:8
[59] Exodus 20:2
[60] A adds: "because the nine depend on the first"
[61] Syr. ܟܕ ܣܓܕܝܢ ܠܒܥܠܐ . Literally: "while they were bowing down to Baal", but throughout I have translated the verb (and its noun form) as "worship", except in cases where the reference is clearly to earthly dignitaries (eg. 14.44; 17.8). In demonstration 17, Aphrahat draws a parallel between the worship of God, the worship of Christ, and the 'worship' of earthly dignitaries.
[62] In the second demonstration Aphrahat argues that love of God and

them, *"Light a lamp for yourselves and seek the Lord."* And Isaiah the prophet said, *"Seek the Lord, and when you have found him call upon him. And when he draws near, let the sinner abandon his way and the wicked man his thoughts."* [63] For that lamp shone, but they did not seek the Lord their God with it, and its light shone in the darkness but the darkness did not understand it.[64] The lamp was placed on the lampstand, but those who were in the house did not see its light. What does the fact that the lamp was placed on the lampstand signify, if not [Christ's] being lifted up on the Cross? And through this the whole house became dark over them. For when they crucified him, the light removed itself [65] from them and shone for the peoples, since from the sixth hour, when they crucified him, to the ninth hour, darkness was upon the whole land of Israel. The sun set at noon and the land became dark in the brightness of the day, as it is written in Zechariah the prophet: *"It will come to pass on that day, says the Lord, that I will cause the sun to set at noon, and I will darken the land in the brightness of the day."* [66]

12. I now continue with my former subject of faith, through which arise all the beautiful works associated with the building. Concerning the building which I spoke about, I did not speak in a strange manner, since the blessed apostle wrote in [his] first letter to the Corinthians, *"As a wise architect I laid a foundation, and each person builds on it."* [67] Some build [with] silver and gold and precious stones. Some build [with] reeds and straw and stubble. On the last day that building will be tested by the fire. Gold, silver, and precious stones will be preserved in the fire, since they make up a solid building. But the fire will overcome the straw, reeds, and stubble,

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love of neighbour are the essence of the Law and the essence of Christ's teaching. Thus, a rejection of the first commandment (leading to a rejection of all the rest) is quite clearly a rejection of Christ.

[63] Isaiah 55:6-7

[64] John 1:10-11

[65] Literally: "darkened itself"

[66] Amos 8:9 (cf. Zechariah 14:6-7)

[67] 1Corinthians 3:10, 12

and they will burn. And what are the gold, silver, and precious stones with which the building rises up, if not the good works of faith? They are preserved in the midst of the fire because Christ lives in that solid building. He is the one who preserves it from the fire. Let us also observe and understand from the example that God has given us in this world, for the promises of that world will hold true for us. Let us learn, then, from the three righteous men who were thrown into the middle of the fire yet were not burned: Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael.[68] The fire had no power over them, because they built a strong building and rejected the commandment of Nebuchadnezzar the king, and did not worship the image that he had made. But fire immediately overcame and burned those who had transgressed the commandment of God, and they were burned without mercy. For the Sodomites were burned like straw, reeds, and stubble.[69] Nadab and Abihu, who transgressed the commandment of God,[70] were also burned.[71] And two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense were also burned.[72] Two captains, as well as a hundred [soldiers] who were with them, were burned because they approached the mountain where Elijah (who ascended to heaven in a chariot of fire[73]) was sitting.[74] The slanderers were also burned because they dug a pit for righteous men.[75] For this reason, my friend, the righteous will be tested by the fire, like gold and silver and precious stones, but the wicked will be burned in the fire, like straw, reeds, and stubble, for the fire has power over them and they are burned, as the prophet Isaiah said, *"The Lord judges by fire, and through it tests all people."* [76] Again he said, *"You will go out and see the corpses of the men who have*

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[68] Daniel 3:21-22
[69] Genesis 19:24-28
[70] *B* omits "of God"
[71] Numbers 3:4; Leviticus 10:1-2
[72] Numbers 17:35
[73] B omits "of fire"
[74] 2Kings 1:9-16
[75] Daniel 3:22
[76] Isaiah 66:16

sinned against me, whose worm does not die and whose fire is not quenched; they will be an astonishment to all people." [77]

13. Again, the apostle has given us an explanation of this building and this foundation. For he said, *"No person is able to establish a foundation other than the one that has been established: Jesus Christ."* [78] And concerning faith, the apostle said that it is mixed with hope and love, for he said, *"These three things will endure: faith, hope, and love."* [79] And with respect to faith, he showed that first it is established on a firm foundation.

14. Because of his faith, the offering of Abel was accepted.[80] Enoch was spared death because he was pleasing [to God] in his faith.[81] Noah was protected from the flood because he believed.[82] Abraham was blessed through his faith, and it was considered righteousness for him.[83] Isaac was loved because he believed. Jacob was preserved because of his faith. Joseph was tested in the waters of controversy because of his faith, and was delivered from his trial. His Lord established a witness in him, as David[84] said, *"He established a witness in Joseph."* [85] Moses performed many amazing

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[77] Isaiah 66:24

[78] 1Corinthians 3:11

[79] 1Corinthians 13:13. Aphrahat does not mention the (awkward) fact that for Paul love is the highest virtue.

[80] Genesis 4.4. This is the first example in the *Demonstrations* of a device used often by Aphrahat: the list of biblical examples (see Murray (1977) for a detailed discussion). An early example from Jewish literature can be found in *Jubilees*. Aphrahat makes clear the significance of the events recounted in sections 14-18 right at the end of those sections: "All these powerful acts were brought about by faith." From this point of view, the miracles of Jesus are continuous with the miracles of the Old Testament.

[81] Genesis 5:24

[82] Genesis 6:9

[83] Genesis 15:6

[84] A adds "the son of Jesse"

[85] Psalm 81:5

miracles through faith. Through faith he destroyed the Egyptians with ten plagues.[86] Through faith he also divided the sea, made his people pass through, and drowned the Egyptians in the middle [of the sea].[87] By faith he threw a piece of wood in the bitter water and it became sweet.[88] By faith he brought down manna and satisfied his people.[89] And by faith he stretched out his hands and defeated Amalek, as it is written, *"His hands remained steadfast until the sun went down."* [90] He also went up Mount Sinai in faith, when he fasted twice, for forty days each time.[91] And again, through faith he defeated Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites.[92]

15. This was a great and wonderful marvel that Moses performed at the Red Sea, my friend, when through faith he divided the waters, and they stood up like high mountains and mighty cliffs. They were holding back and standing up because of the commandment; they were tied up as if in wineskins,[93] confined in the heights and the depths. Though liquid, they did not pass over the boundary,[94] but they changed their created nature, and things created without senses became obedient. The billows became swollen and awaited the judgement[95] while the people passed over. It is amazing how the surging waves waited and looked for the commandment and the judgement. The foundations from [past] ages of the world were

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[86] Exodus 7:14-13:16

[87] Exodus 14:15-31

[88] Exodus 15:22-26

[89] Exodus 16:1-36

[90] Exodus 17:12. Syr. ܗܘܝ̈ܢ ܐܝܕܘܗܝ ܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ . The term ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ as used in the Moses story refers to the 'firmness' or 'steadfastness' of Moses' hands, but here Aphrahat interprets it as a reference to Moses' faith.

[91] Exodus 24:18; 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:9, 18

[92] Numbers 21:35; Deuteronomy 2:26-3:17

[93] Cf. Psalm 33:7

[94] Syr. ܘܪܟܝܟܘܬܗܘܢ ܠܐ ܥܒܪܬ ܬܚܘܡܐ. A literal translation would be: "And their softness did not pass over the boundary."

[95] Presumably the reference is to the destruction of Pharoah and his army.

revealed, and ground that had been moist from the beginning suddenly became dry. The gates lifted up their heads, and the eternal gates were lifted up.[96] The column of light entered and brought light to the whole camp, and the people crossed over in faith. But the judgement of righteousness came upon Pharoah and his army and his chariots.

16. Joshua son of Nun also divided the Jordan through faith, and the Israelites passed over as in the days of Moses.[97] But be aware, my friend, that this passage across the Jordan was opened up three times: first by Joshua son of Nun, second by Elijah, and then by Elisha. For the word of scripture makes known that next to this crossing to Jericho is where Elijah was taken up into heaven. For when Elisha returned from following him, he divided the Jordan and crossed over, and the members of the prophetic community of Jericho came out to meet him and said, *"The spirit of Elijah has come to rest upon Elisha."* [98] [It was also there that] the people crossed over in the days of Joshua son of Nun, for it is written, *"The people crossed over opposite Jericho."* [99] It was also through faith that Joshua son of Nun threw down the walls of Jericho, and they fell without any struggle.[100] He also destroyed the thirty-one kings through faith, and gave the land to the Israelites as an inheritance.[101] It was also through his faith that he stretched out his hands toward heaven and stopped the sun in Gibeon and the moon in the valley of Ayyalon, and they stopped in their tracks and stood still.[102] In summary, all the righteous, our fathers,[103] were triumphant in all the things

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[96] Cf. Psalm 24:7-9

[97] Joshua 3

[98] 2Kings 2:15

[99] Joshua 3:17

[100] Joshua 6

[101] Joshua 11:23; 12:24

[102] Joshua 10:12-13

[103] Syr. ܐܒܗܬܢ . Cf. 4.1 ("our righteous fathers"); 4.5 ("our father Jacob" [used twice]); 4.9 ("our righteous fathers"); 4.12 ("our righteous fathers"); 7.16 ("our forefathers"); 8.7 ("our fathers", "our father Jacob");

they did through faith, as the blessed apostle testifies concerning them: *"Through faith they prospered."* [104] Solomon also said, *"Many men are called 'merciful', but who can find a faithful man?"* [105] And Job said, *"My integrity will not depart from me, and in my righteousness I will endure."* [106]

17. Furthermore, our Lifegiver would say to each person who was approaching him to be healed, *"It will happen to you according to your faith."* [107] When the blind man approached him He said to him, *"Do you believe that I am able to heal you?"* And that blind man said to him, *"Yes my Lord, I believe!"* [108] His faith opened his eyes. And to the man whose son was sick He said, *"Believe, and your son will live."* He said to him, *"I believe, my Lord. Assist my weak faith."* [109] And by his faith his son was made well. Again, when the servant of the king approached [Jesus], his child was made well through his faith when he said to our Lord, *"Speak the word and my child will be healed."* [110] Our Lord was amazed at his faith, and according to his faith it was done for him. When the leader of the synagogue came to [Christ] concerning his daughter, [Christ] said to him, *"Just believe firmly, and your daughter will live."* [111] He believed, and his daughter revived and stood up. When Lazarus died, our Lord said to Martha, *"If you believe, your brother will rise [again]."* And Martha said to him, *"Yes, my Lord, I believe."* [112] And he raised him up after four days. Furthermore, it was because of his faith that Simon, called 'the rock' [or

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9.13 ("our forefathers"); 10.5 ("our forefathers); 14.27 ("our forefather Isaac"); 16.1 ("our father Jacob"); 19.11 ("our father Jacob"); 22.9 ("their forefathers"). These passages should be read as Christian 'spiritualizing' appropriations of Jewish scripture rather than a claim to Jewish ancestry.

[104] Hebrews 11:33

[105] Proverbs 20:6

[106] Job 27:5-6

[107] Mark 5:34, Luke 7:50

[108] Matthew 9:28-29

[109] Mark 9:24

[110] Matthew 8:8-10; Luke 7:1-10

[111] Mark 5:23-42

[112] John 11:23-27

'Peter'], was called 'the true rock'.[113] And when our Lord gave the mystery of baptism to his apostles, He said to them, *"Whoever believes and is baptized will live, but whoever does not believe will be judged."* [114] He also said to his apostles, *"If you believe and do not doubt there is nothing that you will not be able to do."* [115] For when our Lord walked on the billows of the sea, Simon also walked with him through faith. But when he doubted with respect to faith and began to sink, our Lord called him 'of little faith'. And when his apostles requested [something] from our Lord, they asked for nothing but said to him, *"Increase our faith!"* He said to them, *"If faith is in you, even a mountain will move out of your way."* [116] And He said to them, *"Do not doubt and sink yourselves down into the world, like Simon, who, when he doubted, began to sink into the sea."* [117] He also said, *"This will be the mark of those who believe: they will speak in new tongues and cast out demons, and they will place their hands on sick people and they will be made well."* [118]

18. Let us therefore draw near to faith, my friend, since it has so many powers. For faith raised up [Enoch] to heaven, overcame the flood, caused the barren to give birth, delivered [people] from the sword, raised up [Jeremiah] from the pit, enriched the poor, released the captives, rescued the persecuted, brought down fire, divided the sea, split the hard rock, gave water to the thirsty, satisfied the hungry, revived the dead and raised [them] up from Sheol, calmed the waves, healed the sick, overcame armies, brought down walls, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the flame of the fire, humbled the boastful, and brought the humble to honour. All these powerful acts were brought about by faith.

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[113] Matthew 16:18
[114] Mark 16:16
[115] Matthew 22:21
[116] Matthew 17:20; Mark 11:22-23; Luke 17:5
[117] An agraphon found in Matthew 14:28-31
[118] Mark 16:17-18

19. Now this is faith:[119] when a person believes in God, the Lord of all, who made heaven and earth, and the seas and all that is in them, and who made Adam in his image. He gave the Torah[120] to Moses, sent [a portion] of his Spirit into the prophets, and sent his Annointed One into the world. Such a person also believes in the resurrection of the dead and the mystery of baptism. This is the faith of the Church of God. [It is also necessary that] a person separate himself from the observation of hours, Sabbaths, moons and seasons,[121] from oracles, divinations, astrology and magic, from fornication and reveling,[122] from empty teachings (which are the instruments of the Evil One), from the flattery of sweet words, from blasphemy, and from adultery.[123] And he must not bear false witness, nor speak with a double tongue. These are the works of the faith that is placed on the firm rock, which is Christ, upon whom the whole building rises.

20. There is much, my friend, on the subject of faith in the holy scriptures. From the many things [which could have been included] I have written this small amount [as] a reminder to your love, so that you might know and give knowledge, and also believe and be believed. When you have read and learned the works of faith, you

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[119] We are told that faith consists in believing certain propositions about salvation history. It is clear from earlier passages that faith is not really faith unless it is brought to perfection through good works, yet here we see a distinction between what faith *is* (propositions about salvation history) and what faith merely *characterizes* (certain works *of* faith). The implication is that good works are of no value without the right context of propositional belief. However, it needs to be added that this propositional belief is itself rooted not in a philosophical system but rather in what Aphrahat takes to be his (and the Church's) experience of God.

[120] Syr. ܢܡܘܣܐ

[121] cf. Galatians 4:10

[122] A: "from adultery and fornication and revelling"

[123] The reference to adultery makes clear that Aphrahat is here referring to the Church as a whole and not just ascetics. This is an exception that proves the rule. The provision of a general statement of faith is to guide ascetics as they exercise teaching roles in the Church.

will be like that ploughed land upon which the good seed fell, which produced a hundredfold, sixtyfold, or thirtyfold.[124] And when you go to your Lord, he will call you a good, diligent, and faithful servant, who, because of his great faith, enters into the kingdom of his Lord.[125]

The demonstration on faith is completed.

[124] Matthew 13:8; Mark 4:9; Luke 8:8
[125] Matthew 25:21

DEMONSTRATION 2: *ON LOVE*

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3-7 main narrative and subplot: Christ and the Law
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II. TRANSLATION

1. Surely, my friend, all the Law and the Prophets depend on two commandments, as our Saviour said, *"The Torah*[1] *and the Prophets are not enough to convince the one who is not convinced."*[2] For our Saviour said, *"On these two commandments hang the Torah*[3] *and the Prophets: a*

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[1] Syr. ܢܡܘܣܐ

[2] Cf. Luke 16:31. The sense here seems to be that acceptance of the Law and the Prophets is no guarantee that one will be truly convinced of the validity of the commandments of love. In other words, the Law depends on love, not vice versa.

[3] Syr. ܢܡܘܣܐ

man should love the Lord his God with all his spirit and all his strength and all his possessions, and a man should also love his neighbour as himself." [4]

2. When you go on to examine these two commandments, upon which depends the whole force of the Law and the Prophets, [you will also see that] if these two commandments, upon which depends the whole force of the Law and the Prophets, had been set in the hearts and minds of people, then the Law and the Prophets which have been written would not have been needed. As it is written, *"The Law was not established for the righteous, but for the wicked."* [5] It was because of the wicked that the Law was established. If righteousness had remained among people, there would have been no need for the Law. However, if the Law had not been established, the power of God would not have been known in all generations, through all the wonders that he showed.[6] Because of the transgression of the commandment by the house of Adam, death was decreed upon the world. But the might of God will be seen when all people rise in the end, at the time when the dominion of death will be taken away. In the days of Noah, it was because of the wicked that the might of God was seen in the waters of the flood. However, the might of God was seen in Abraham through righteousness, because he preserved a righteousness according to the Law before the Law was established. When he brought back what he had captured from Sodom through the might of his God, he did not appropriate the valuable items. After that day, God said to him, *"Your reward is greatly multiplied because of your righteousness."* [7] He upon whom the Law had not been imposed manifested the works of the Law; a law was not required for his righteousness. Likewise, there was no need for the Law to be established for the righteousness of Isaac and Jacob his sons, for their father commanded them to act

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[4] Matthew 22:37-40; cf. Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27; Deuteronomy 6:5

[5] 1Timothy 1:9

[6] In other words, if people had not sinned, there would have been no Law and no need for God to demonstrate his power in overcoming sin in the world.

[7] Genesis 15:1

righteously and justly. As it is written, the Lord said concerning Abraham, *"I know that he will command his sons after him to keep all my commandments."* [8] Joseph, too, preserved a righteousness that was according to the Law when he did not obey Pharoah's wife. For he said, *"How could I do this great evil and sin against God?"* [9] And Moses also preserved a righteousness that was according to the Law when he refused to be called a son of the daughter of Pharoah. For this reason the Lord considered him worthy [of being the one] through whom he gave the Law to his people. All of these [people] manifested the works of the Law, but the Law was not established for their righteousness. They were a law unto themselves.[10]

3. When the time of the Law came, it was added because of apostasy. [God] showed that the Law was an addition. Why was this addition [made], if not because of the calling of the peoples, which was promised in advance before the Law? That Law was a guardian and an educator[11] until the seed came, in whom the peoples have been blessed.[12] For the word of the oath which was promised to Abraham was also the testament[13] of promise which God spoke to Abraham: *"Through your seed all nations will be blessed."* [14] This is the word, which is the testament, which he promised to Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the establishing of the Law: that the peoples would be blessed by his seed, which is Christ. The Law came into being after these four hundred and

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[8] Genesis 18:19

[9] Genesis 39:9

[10] Cf. Romans 2:14

[11] Cf. Galatians 3:24

[12] It is not clear why Aphrahat says that the addition of the Law was "because of" the calling of the peoples. He does not explain how the Law's role as guardian and educator for Israel is related to the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that all peoples would be blessed through his seed.

[13] Syr. ܩܝܡܐ . See Nedungatt (1973) for a discussion of this term, along with the synonymous (and more important) term "covenant" in the *Demonstrations* (ܥܗܕܐ).

[14] Genesis 18:18; 22:18; 26:4

thirty years. For when Abraham received this promise he was eighty-five years old, and it was two hundred and five years from that time until [the time] when Jacob entered Egypt. And it was two hundred and twenty-five years from the time when Jacob entered Egypt up to [the time] when the people left [Egypt] led by Moses.

4. It is written[15] that the Israelites stayed in Egypt for four hundred and thirty years. But why, my friend, is "four hundred and thirty years" written when they stayed there[16] for two hundred and twenty-five? It is because God said to Abraham, *"Know with certainty that your offspring will be inhabitants of a land that is not their own, and that they will serve [the people of that land] and be subjugated by them for four hundred years."* [17] For at the time when that word was spoken to Abraham (*"You will have a child"* [18]), [this child] was formed in the heart of Abraham through faith, as it is written: *"Abraham believed God, and it was considered righteousness for him."* [19] Furthermore, the word concerning the slavery that his offspring would be subjected to in Egypt was conceived in the heart of Abraham, and he began to worry about how his offspring would be enslaved. [In this way] his [own] heart was serving in Egypt. Likewise Isaac and Jacob were also thinking about [this] slavery, and [thus] their minds were serving in Egypt. Slavery was promised for the seed of Abraham before they were born. For the word was [given] fifteen years before the birth of Isaac, and two hundred and five years before they entered Egypt, and the promise that all peoples would be blessed by the seed of Abraham [came] four hundred and thirty years before the Law. And the Law was not able to annul the promise, but

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[15] Syr. ܘܐܬܪܫܡܬ ܡܠܬܐ . The fact that Aphrahat uses the more conventional ܐܬܟܬܒ in the next sentence with reference to the same subject indicates that we should not read anything into the variation in terms.

[16] A: "when they were made to stay there" (Afel instead of Peal)

[17] Genesis 15:13

[18] Genesis 15:4

[19] Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:13

became an addition to that word of promise until the time came [for this word to be fulfilled].

5. This word was preserved for one thousand seven hundred and ninety-four years, from the time when it was promised to Abraham until it came [to pass]. And this word was in safe-keeping for one thousand three hundred and sixty-four years after the Law was established. The word was four hundred and thirty years older than the Law, and when it was fulfilled[20] it did away with the observances of the Law. The Law and the Prophets have been brought to a conclusion by these two commandments of which our Lord spoke. For the word is written: *"All the Law and the Prophets prophesied before John the Baptist."* [21] And our Lord said, *"I have not come to dismiss the Torah*[22] *and the Prophets, but to fulfill them."* [23] It is also written, *"The truth of the Law comes through Jesus."* [24]

6. And how were the Law and the Prophets lacking and in need of being fulfilled? It was because the testament, which was the word of the promise, was hidden in them. For the testament which was given to Moses was not sealed until this last testament came, which was [also] before. It was promised from above and inscribed below.[25] The one [26] who brought the testament died, and established the two testaments. *"He made the two one and by his commandments the Law of the commandments*[27] *ceased",*[28] for the customs of the Law came to an end at the coming of our Lifegiver, and he offered himself in place of the offerings which are[29] in the Law.[30] He was

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[20] Literally: "when it came"
[21] Matthew 11:13
[22] Syr. ܢܡܘܣܐ
[23] Matthew 5:17
[24] Cf. John 1:17
[25] A has "from above" instead of "below"
[26] B: "those who brought"
[27] A: "commandment"
[28] Ephesians 2:14-15
[29] A: "offering which is"

led like a lamb to the slaughter in place of the lambs,[31] and he, the fattened bull, was killed for us so that we would have no need to offer the offspring of cattle. He came and went up on the Cross so that offerings and sacrifices would not be required of us. He gave his blood on behalf of all people, so that the blood of living creatures would not be required of us. He entered the sanctuary which was not made by [human] hands, and he became the priest and minister of the holy place. For from the moment that he came he did away with the observances of the Law, and from the time that they bound him the festivals were bound with chains for them. Because they wanted to judge the Innocent One, [God] took away judges from them.[32] And because they rejected his kingdom, he took the kingdom away from them, for the One to whom the kingdom belongs has come. He ascended as a living sacrifice on our behalf, and brought an end to their sacrifices. And the Israelites remained without sacrifices and altar, without the putting on of the ephod and the burning of incense. He brought an end to the visions and prophets among them because they did not listen to the Great Prophet. [33] The earlier testament was fulfilled by the later

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[30] This section makes clear that when Aphrahat speaks of the "observances" and the "customs" of the Law being superseded, he is speaking of what we would call the ritual Law. Christ's one sacrifice, he wants to say, has replaced the whole Jewish sacrificial and ritual system. This rejection of the ritual Law was already hinted at in the list of things to be avoided in section 19 of the first demonstration, among which were "the observation of hours, Sabbaths, moons and seasons." The fact that Aphrahat upholds the Jewish *moral* Law is easily seen in his frequent use of the Old Testament. Indeed, it is precisely this moral Law that Aphrahat makes use of at the end of this section to defend his rejection of the ritual Law.

[31] A: "lamb of propitiation"

[32] Cf. the 11th of the Eighteen Benedictions in the Jewish liturgy: "Restore our judges as in former times..."

[33] The superiority of the new covenant, in Aphrahat's view, goes beyond the rejection of the ritual Law and the summation of the moral Law in the two commandments of love: it is also the case that God no longer chooses to inspire true prophets who do not follow the Great Prophet. In

one, and the works which are in the Law[34] became old and outdated. They were fit for destruction, for from the time that the new was given it brought an end to the old. It was not only at the time of the coming of our Saviour that sacrifices were rejected, but also before that their sacrifices did not please him, as it is written, *"I do not eat the flesh of calves or drink the blood of young goats; rather, sacrifice thanksgiving to God, and fulfill your vows to the Most High."* [35] He also said, *"God does not reject a broken heart."* [36] And again He said, *"I did not desire sacrifices, nor am I pleased by whole burnt offerings.*[37] *The sacrifices of God are a humble spirit."* [38] And Isaiah the prophet said, *"I do not require the multitude of your sacrifices, says the Lord."* [39] He also said to them, *"I hate and have rejected your festivals, and I will not smell [the sacrifices at] your [religious] assemblies."* [40]

7. Again, this word that our Saviour spoke, upon which the Torah[41] and the Prophets depend, is beautiful, excellent, and good.

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other words, there are no Jewish prophets who can claim to be inspired by God, since if they were, they would not be Jewish but Christian. For Christ as the "Great Prophet", cf. 4.6, 14.33, and 17.11. As Pierre points out (1988, 244, n. 23), the title "great prophet" is also applied to Moses (14.42; 18.3; 18.4; 20.2; 23.7; 23.11; 23.12), but it should be noted that in all of these cases some form of the qualifying phrase "of Israel" is used.

[34] These stand in contrast the works of the new (and old) Law of faith, i.e. the two commandments of love. It is important to note that in section two above, the (genuine) righteousness of the patriarchs consists in their manifestation of the "works of the Law" (ܥܒܕܘܗܝ ܕܢܡܘܣܐ) before the Law was revealed. The phrase "works which are in the Law" in the present passage, using a different noun for "works" (ܥܒܝܕܬܐ ܕܢܡܘܣܐ), refers to ritual, since Aphrahat goes on to speak of the rejection of sacrifice.

[35] Psalm 50:13-14

[36] Psalm 51:19

[37] Jeremiah 6:20

[38] Psalm 51:19

[39] Isaiah 1:11

[40] Isaiah 1:14; Amos 5:21

[41] Syr. ܐܘܪܝܬܐ

For our Lord spoke in this way: *"A single letter yud will not pass away from the Torah*[42] *and the Prophets until everything takes place."* [43] For he took the Law and the Prophets and made them depend on two commandments, and he did not remove anything from them. When you look carefully at this word, [you will see that my interpretation] is true. The observances which are required by the Law[44] and everything that is written in it are included in that word, *"Love the Lord your God with all your soul and all your strength and all your heart."* [45] Everything that is done through the Law is meant to encourage people to love the Lord their God, and a person should love his neighbour[46] as himself: these two commandments are above the whole Law.[47] And when you set your heart and gaze into the Law, at the head of the whole Law it is written: *"I am the Lord your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. Do not make for yourselves, in addition to me, any image or any likeness."* [48] When a person does not make another god in front of himself, he submits to the word from which the Law and the Prophets hang. Remember, my friend, that I wrote to you that the Law was not established for the righteous, since the one who maintains righteousness is above the commandment and the Law and the Prophets. The word that our Lord spoke is true: *"The letter yud will not pass away from the Law or from the Prophets,"* since he has sealed[49] them and made them depend on two commandments.

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[42] Syr. ܐܘܪܝܬܐ

[43] Matthew 5:18

[44] Syr. ܢܛܪܘܬܐ ܕܒܢܡܘܣܐ ; literally, "the observance which is in the Law"

[45] Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37

[46] Syr. ܠܩܪܝܒ ܒܣܪܗ ; literally: "the neighbour of his flesh" or "the one who is near his flesh"

[47] Aphrahat seems to affirm that even the ritual law was "meant to encourage people to love" both God and neighbour.

[48] Exodus 20:2-4

[49] A has ܬܚܡ instead of ܚܬܡ : "confined" or "defined" instead of "sealed"

8. Listen, my friend, to the explanation of this word. If a person says, 'Why was it written that the time the Israelites spent in the land of Egypt was four hundred and thirty years, when it was promised and spoken to Abraham that it would be four hundred years? Did they receive thirty years in addition?' Now I will show you, my friend, how things were. When the time of the fulfillment of the four hundred years came, Moses was sent to deliver them. When he killed the Egyptian and they rejected him as their saviour, Moses fled to Midian. Wrath came upon them and they remained in Egypt for thirty years. For they said to Moses, *"Who appointed you over us as ruler and judge?"* [50] And when they rejected their saviour, the wrath of God held them back for thirty years in the midst of Egypt, and Moses was in Midian for thirty years. Then, when their troubles multiplied upon them, he brought them out of Egypt. God showed them his patience, first, so that they might be chastized for rejecting Moses, and second, so that the offences of the Amorites might be completed. He imposed on[51] the people thirty years more than what he had promised to Abraham. And he was patient with the Amorites for seventy years: thirty in Egypt and forty in the desert. When the four hundred and thirty years were completed, as well as the forty years for the completion of the offences of the Amorites, he brought them into the promised land.

9. Be aware, my friend, that there is no law for God. For sometimes he increases or takes away, and at other times he adds to what is small. In the days of Noah, he promised that the length of a person's life would be one hundred and twenty years, because of the wickedness of the people, and in the six hundredth year of the lifetime of Noah, he destroyed them. For he had said, *"They will be on the earth for one hundred and twenty years."* [52] But in the six hundredth year of the lifetime of Noah, they were destroyed. Thus he took away twenty years. It is also written that when the wickedness of the sinful kingdom of Ephraim increased under the rule of Jero-

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[50] Exodus 2:11-15

[51] Syr. ܚܣܪ ; literally: "added to"

[52] Genesis 6:3. The promise was made when Noah was 500.

boam son of Nabat, who sinned and caused Israel to sin, [God] made a promise about them through the prophecy of the prophet Isaiah, who said to them, *"After sixty-five years, Ephraim will fall away from the people."* [53] This word [was spoken] in the first year of Ahaz. In the fourth year of Hezekiah, Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against them, and after him Tiglath-pilneser, and he led them into exile from their land.[54] Ahaz had ruled over them for sixteen years, and in the fourth year of Hezekiah the kings of Assyria [began] to rule over them. [Thus] it was after only twenty years that Ephraim fell away from the people of Israel; forty-five years were taken away from them. What [God] had spoken beforehand and the time he had appointed was not fulfilled as he had decreed.

10. It was not through ignorance but in [full] knowledge that he made a promise concerning them that things[55] would be [a certain way] but then years were taken away or added. For he knew what they were going to do,[56] and because of his mercy he provided a time for repentance, so that people would be without excuse. But these people despised the patience of God. When they heard that there was a long time before the wrath that was promised would come, they became rebellious and sinned before him, saying, *"What the prophets spoke was prophesied for a distant time."* [57] For this reason, when this thought arose in them in the days of Ezekiel the prophet and they said, *"That which is prophesied is for a distant time,"* [God] said to Ezekiel, *"As I live, says the Lord of hosts, there will be no delay for my words again, for the word which I speak I will perform immediately."* [58] [According to] what he had decreed beforehand, he gave a time of repentance to people, so that perhaps they might repent. But they despised the patience of God and did not repent, and he denied

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[53] Isaiah 7:8

[54] 2Kings 18:9-11; 1Chronicles 5:26

[55] Literally: "they"

[56] Syr. ܝܕܥ ܗܘܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܠܗܕܐ ܡܫܘܚܬܐ ܐܬܝܢ ; literally: "he knew that they were going toward this condition"

[57] Ezekiel 12:27

[58] Ezekiel 12:28

them the time that he had appointed and decreed for them. And it was not in ignorance that he acted, but according to what is written: *"Woe to the one who plunders! You will not plunder, and the deceiver will not deceive you, but when you wish to plunder you will be plundered, and when you wish to deceive you will be deceived."* [59] It is also written in Jeremiah, *"If I speak against a people or a kingdom to uproot and pull [them] down, to defeat and destroy [them], and if that people repents of their evil, I will deny them my word and turn away from them what I have spoken against them."* And Jeremiah also says, *"If I speak concerning a people or a kingdom, to build [them] up and to plant [them], and [if] that people does evil before me, I will deny them my word and turn away from them the goodness which I have spoken to benefit them."* [60]

11. I have written all these things to you, my friend, since in the previous homily on the generation of faith I showed you that the foundation of this covenant in which we stand can be established through faith. In this second homily, I have written to you and reminded you that all the Law and the Prophets follow two commandments, those concerning which our Saviour spoke, and in these two commandments all the Law and the Prophets are included. Faith[61] is included in the Law, and through faith true love is established. This [true love] is from these two commandments: after a person loves the Lord his God, he should also love his neighbour as himself.

12. Now listen, my friend, [as I tell you] about the love that comes from these two commandments.[62] For when our Lifegiver came, he

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[59] Isaiah 33:1

[60] Jeremiah 18:7-10

[61] A: "All of faith", or "The whole faith"

[62] It is noteworthy that when Aphrahat turns his attention to the characterization of love, the action that he focusses on first (and this at great length) is the forgiveness of others, whether "enemies" or "brothers". We may tentatively conclude that forgiveness is the supreme act of love for Aphrahat, more so even than various forms of service to others (though these of course cannot be insignificant). He also makes clear that the be-

expounded on the diligence of love. He said to his disciples, *"This is my commandment: You should love one another."* [63] He also said to them, *"I am giving a new commandment to you: Love one another."* [64] And again, when he was expounding on love, he warned them as follows: *"Love your enemies, bless the one who curses you, and pray for those who deal harshly with you and persecute you."* [65] He also said this to them: *"If you love the one who loves you, what have you gained? For if you love the one who loves you, [remember that] the ungodly* [66] *also act this way; they love the one who loves them."* [67] Our Lifegiver also said, *"If you do good to the one who pleases you, what have you gained? Even tax-collectors and sinners act in this way! But because you are called children of God,*[68] *who is in heaven, you should resemble Him, He who loves even those who have renounced goodness."* [69] Again, our Saviour said, *"Forgive, and it will be forgiven you; release, and you will be released; give, and it will be given to you."* [70] Again he spoke, and set fear in us: *"If you do not forgive the offences which people have committed against you, the Father will not forgive you either."* [71] For he warned and spoke as follows: *"If your brother offends you, forgive him, and even if he offends you seven times in one day, forgive him."* [72]

13. When Simon Peter heard this word, he said to our Lord, *"How many times should I forgive my brother if he offends me? Seven times?"* Our Lord said to him, *"Not seven [times] only, but seven times seventy times. Forgive him even if he offends you four hundred and ninety times in one*

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liever's forgiveness of enemies is grounded in the divine example.

[63] John 15:12

[64] John 13:34

[65] Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27-28

[66] Syr. ܥܬܝܩܐ . Cf. 5.23: "For even if a person has served the ungodly (ܥܬܝܩܐ), the moment he approaches the covenant of God he is set free. The Jews, however, are serving in slavery among the peoples (ܒܥܒܕܘܬܐ)."

[67] Matthew 5:46; Luke 6:32

[68] A: "the living God"

[69] Luke 6:35

[70] Luke 6:37-38

[71] Matthew 6:15

[72] Luke 17:3

day." [73] [Such a person] has become like his good Father, who multiplied his forgiveness upon Jerusalem. When he made the Israelites go into captivity in Babylon, he chastized them there for seventy years. And when his mercy was set in motion, he gathered them to their land through Ezra the scribe. He multiplied his forgiveness toward them by one half of his day, [which is about] seventy weeks of years (four hundred and ninety years).[74] But when [the inhabitants of the city] shed innocent blood he did not pardon Jerusalem, but delivered it into the hands of its enemies. They uprooted it and did not leave one stone upon another, nor did they leave the foundation for the Lord. And he did not say to the Edomites[75] that they would be punished, because they did not cry out concerning Jerusalem, *"Lay it bare! Lay it bare to its foundations!"* [76] God forgave [them] for half of his day (four hundred and ninety years) and endured their sins. But then he uprooted Jerusalem and delivered it into the hands of foreigners. It is in this way that our Lifegiver commanded that a person should forgive his brother four hundred and ninety times in one day.

14. Do not be disturbed,[77] my friend, at the word that I have written you (that God forgave Jerusalem for half of his day). For it is written by David in Psalm ninety, *"In the eyes of the Lord, a thousand years are like a day which has ended and has passed away."* [78] And our wise teachers say that just as the world was established by God in six days, so too at the completion of six thousand years the world will

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[73] Matthew 18:21-22

[74] Cf. Psalm 90:4, where one day for God is a thousand years.

[75] The reference is to the Roman armies that destroyed the city in 70 CE. Aphrahat thus shares the standard rabbinic designation for the Roman empire. Throughout the *Demonstrations*, the Edomites are identified as descendants of Esau, and in 5.13, Aphrahat mentions them in an apparent reference to the founding of Rome (cf. also 5.24).

[76] Psalm 137:7; cf. Ezekiel 25:12-14

[77] A has ܬܬܩܛܥ instead of ܬܬܥܛܠ : "be discouraged" instead of "be disturbed"

[78] Psalm 90:4

come to an end. This will be the Sabbath of God, like the Sabbath which comes after six days, just as our Saviour clearly showed concerning the Sabbath. For he spoke as follows: *"Pray that your flight will not be in the winter or on the Sabbath."* [79] And the apostle said, *"This Sabbath of God still remains. Let us be diligent, so that we might enter into His rest."* [80]

15. Furthermore, when our Lord taught a prayer to his disciples, He said to them, *"Pray in this way: 'Forgive us our debts, and we also will forgive our debtors.'"* [81] And again He said, *"When you want to bring an offering and you remember that you hold some grudge against your brother, leave your offering before the altar and go and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your offering."* [82] Otherwise, when a person prays, 'Forgive us our debts,'[83] he will be caught by [what] his mouth [says] and the one who receives prayers will say to him, 'You do not forgive your debtor. How can your debts be forgiven? Your prayer will remain on the earth.' Our Lord also gave us the example of that man who began to settle accounts with his servants. When the servant who owed him ten thousand talents came before him, he pressured him to give back what he owed. But when he was unable to repay his debt to his master, his master commanded him to be released and forgave all that he owed him. But that servant, in his wickedness, did not remember the forgiveness of his master, and how generous his forgiveness of him was. When he went out and found one of his fellow-servants who owed him one hundred denarii, he seized him and choked him and said to him, 'Give me what you owe me!' He did not accept the request that his fellow-servant made of him, but rather went and threw him in prison. Because the one for whom much had been forgiven did not forgive his fellow-servant [even] a little, he was handed over to the guards who beat him until he gave up what he owed. And He said to

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[79] Matthew 24:20
[80] Hebrews 4:9,11
[81] Matthew 6:12
[82] Matthew 5:23-24
[83] A adds "and we also will forgive our debtors"

them, *"This is what my Father in heaven will do to you if you do not forgive your brother."* [84]

16. See also, my friend, how the blessed apostle extolled love when he said, *"If you are zealous for great gifts, I will show you what gift is the most excellent."* [85] And he said, *"If prophecy is in me, and I have knowledge of all mysteries and all knowledge and all faith, so that I can move a mountain, yet have no love, I have not gained anything. And if I give all that I have to feed the poor and commit my body to the flames, and love is not in me, again I have not gained anything."* For he spoke as follows: *"Love is long-suffering and gentle, and it does not envy. It does not boast or puff itself up with pride. It does not seek anything that is pleasing only to itself, but rather that which is beneficial to many. Love hopes for all things and endures all things. Love is never cast down."* Again he said, *"Love is greater than everything."* And the apostle has clearly shown that after faith, love excels, and through it a solid building is established. For he demonstrated that prophecy is established by love, mysteries are revealed by love, knowledge is fulfilled by love, and faith is made firm by love. If a person has in him faith that can move a mountain, but lacks love, it is of no benefit to him. And if a person gives all that he has to the poor, but his alms are not given in love, he has gained nothing. Even if his body is burnt in the fire for the name of his Lord, [without love this] is no advantage [to him]. And again, he demonstrated that these things are found in the fullness of love: patience, self-control, kindness, and a lack of envy for one's brother. [He] also [showed] that it is through love that self-control, humility, and friendliness are established in a person. For faith is placed upon the rock of the structure, and love represents the beams of the structure, and through them the walls of the house are held together. But if a defect is found in the beams of the house, the whole structure will fall down. It is the same with love when dissension is found in it: all of faith falls. Faith was not able to drive away jealousy and controversy[86] until the love of Christ came, just as a struc-

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[84] Matthew 18:23-35

[85] This whole section is based on 1Corinthians 12:31-13:7.

[86] A: "evil controversy"

ture cannot be well-built until the walls are held together by beams.[87]

17. Furthermore, I will show you that love is more excellent than everything, and [that] by it the righteous ones from ancient times were perfected. For [the scriptures] show that Moses gave himself for the sake of his people, and wanted to be erased from the Book of Life if only the people would not be erased.[88] Also, when they rose up against him to stone him, he offered up intercession on their behalf before God, so that they would live.[89] David, too, showed an example of love when he was persecuted by Saul, who was hunting him all the time in order to kill him. But David, in his overflowing love, showed mercy to his enemy Saul, who was seeking his life. Twice he was delivered into the hands of David, yet David did not kill him, but payed back goodness instead of evil.[90] Because of this, goodness did not depart from his house, and the one who forgave was forgiven. But evil did not depart from the house of Saul, who payed back evil for goodness. He called to God, but [God] did not answer him,[91] and he died by the sword[s] of the Philistines. David wept bitterly over him,[92] and fulfilled in advance the commandment of our Saviour, who said, *"Love your*

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[87] Note that "dissension", "jealousy", and "quarrelling" are the opposites of love listed here, instead of lack of concern for the poor or any other quality. This relates no doubt to the idea that the supreme act of love is forgiveness. Aphrahat's observations on the limitations of faith without love in this passage are striking in the context of the first demonstration's emphasis on the power of faith. Yet we would do well to keep in mind that faith is primarily compared to a whole structure, not simply one aspect of it (i.e. the foundation), and thus, when perfected, it includes love.

[88] Exodus 32:31-32

[89] Numbers 14:10

[90] 1Samuel 24:4-8; 26:9-11

[91] 1Samuel 27:6

[92] 2Samuel 1:17

enemies" [93] and *"Forgive, and you will be forgiven."* [94] In this way, David loved and was loved, and forgave and was forgiven.

18. Elisha, too, demonstrated this love when his enemies came against him to seize him so as to do him harm. He treated them well, set bread and water before them and sent them away in peace.[95] He fulfilled the word that is written: *"If your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him something to drink."* [96] And Jeremiah the prophet kept praying before God for those who had thrown him into a pit and were constantly tormenting him.[97] Our Saviour taught us through these examples of those who have gone before, so that we might love our enemies and pray for those who hate us.[98] And if he has commanded us to love our enemies and to pray for those who hate us, what will our excuse be on the day of judgement, we who hate our brothers and fellow-members [of the Church]?[99] For we are part of the body of Christ, and are members of his members.[100] Whoever hates one of the members of Christ cuts himself off [101] from the whole body, and whoever hates his brother separates himself from the children of God.

19. This is what our Saviour taught us: he demonstrated the diligence of love. For first he brought it to completion in himself, and then he taught those who listened to him. He reconciled our enmity with his Father[102] because he loved us, and offered up his innocence in place of the condemned. The Good One was put to shame in place of the evil ones, and the Rich One was made poor

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[93] Luke 6:35; Matthew 5:44

[94] Luke 6:37

[95] 2Kings 6:13-23

[96] Proverbs 25:21; Romans 12:20

[97] Jeremiah 38:20

[98] Matthew 5:44

[99] See demonstration 14 for Aphrahat's views on the dissension in the Persian Church.

[100] See 1Corinthians 12:27 and context.

[101] A adds "and falls"

[102] Romans 5:6-8

on our behalf. The Living One died instead of the dead, and through his death made our deadness come alive. For our sake the Son of the Lord of All adopted the form of a servant, and He to whom all things are subject subjected himself so that He might free us from the subjection of sin.[103] In his great love he gave a blessing to the poor in spirit,[104] and he promised the servants of peace that they would be called [His] brothers and children of God. He proclaimed to the humble that they would inherit the land of life, and promised the mourners that intercession would be made for them. He promised the hungry abundance in his kingdom, and he made those who weep rejoice in his promise. He promised the compassionate that they would be shown compassion, and He said to the pure in heart that they would see God. He also promised those who are persecuted because of righteousness that they would enter into the kingdom of heaven, and assured those who are persecuted because of his name that they would have blessing and rest in his kingdom. He altered our nature of dust and made us the salt of truth, and delivered us from [being] the food of the serpent. He called us the light of the world,[105] for he will deliver us from the dominion of death. He made us good instead of evil, and pleasing instead of hateful, and gave us mercy instead of hatred.[106] He made us companions of the good man who brings out his good treasures, and he rescued us from the one who brings forth evil things from the overflowings of his heart.[107]

20. Because of his abundant love he healed the diseases of the sick. He healed the son of the centurion, because of his faith.[108] By his power, he calmed the storms of the sea[109] for us, and he chased

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[103] Philippians 2:7
[104] For this and what follows, see Matthew 5:3-16 (cf. Luke 6:20-23)
[105] John 12:35
[106] A omits "and gave us mercy instead of hatred"
[107] Luke 6:45
[108] Matthew 8:13; Luke 7:10
[109] Mark 4:38; Luke 8:24

from us a legion of demons[110] because of his goodness. In his compassion, he raised to life the daughter of the leader of the synagogue,[111] and he purified a woman from an uncleanness caused by blood.[112] He opened the eyes of the two blind men who approached him,[113] and also gave to his twelve [disciples] (and to us through them) power and authority over all disease and sickness.[114] He kept us[115] from the way of the ungodly and the Samaritans.[116] In his mercy he gave us strength so that we might not be afraid when brought before the rulers of this world.[117] He established a division on the earth because of his great peace.[118] He forgave the many offences of the sinful woman because of his mercy.[119] In his goodness he made us worthy, so that we might build a tower at his expense.[120] He cast out from us unclean spirits and made us a dwelling place for his divinity.[121] He sowed the good seed in us, so that we might bear fruit a hundredfold, sixtyfold, or thirtyfold.[122] He was placed in the world like a treasure that is buried in a field.[123] He showed the power of his greatness when he was cast down from a high place into a valley, yet was not harmed.[124] He satisfied the hungry who were weary (five thousand men, besides children and women) with five loaves and two fishes, and [thereby] demon-

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[110] Mark 5:9; Luke 8:30
[111] Luke 8:55
[112] Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-42; Luke 8:40-56
[113] Matthew 9:27-31
[114] Matthew 10:8; Luke 9:1
[115] B: "He kept me"
[116] Matthew 10:5
[117] Matthew 10:17-20
[118] Luke 12:51
[119] Luke 7:47
[120] Luke 14:28
[121] Matthew 12:43; Luke 8:2; 11:24
[122] Matthew 13:23; Mark 4:20
[123] Matthew 13:44
[124] Luke 4:28-30 (probably based on a Diatessaron reading that has Jesus actually being thrown down)

strated the greatness of his glory.[125] Because of his great love he heard the Canaanite woman and raised up her daughter from her sickness.[126] Through the power of the One who sent him he loosened the tongue of the man who was dumb and deaf.[127] The blind saw his light and through him glorified the One who sent him.[128] When he went up the mountain to pray, the rays of the sun were overcome by his light.[129] He made known his great power in that boy upon whom a spirit had come: by his word he drove out the demon of lunacy.[130] He gave to us a pattern and an example, so that we might as children enter into the kingdom of heaven. He spoke and made clear concerning the little ones that a person should not despise them, since their [guardian] angels see the Father in heaven at all times.[131] Again, he demonstrated his perfect healing in that man who had suffered for thirty eight years, and he magnified his grace toward him and healed him.[132] He gave us a command: that we should forsake the world and turn to him.[133] He revealed to us, in the example of the rich man who trusted in his possessions, that whoever loves the world is not able to please God.[134] [He also showed us this] in [the story of] the man who took delight in his material goods but who ended up in Sheol: he asked for water on the tip of [Lazarus'] finger, but no one gave it to him.[135] He hired us as labourers to work in his vineyard, which is the true vineyard.[136] All these things our Lifegiver did for us be-

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[125] A: "the greatness of the One who sent Him"; cf. Matthew 14:15-21; Mark 6:31-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-13

[126] Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30

[127] Mark 7:32-37

[128] Matthew 9:25-31

[129] Matthew 17:2

[130] Matthew 17:14-18

[131] Matthew 18:1-10

[132] John 5:1-18

[133] Matthew 16:26; Mark 8:36; Luke 9:25

[134] Luke 12:13-21

[135] Luke 16:19-31. A omits "he asked… him"

[136] Matthew 20:1-16

cause of his great love. And we too, my friend, will be participants in the love of Christ when we love each other and bring to fulfillment these two commandments, upon which hang all the Law and the Prophets.

The demonstration on love is completed.

DEMONSTRATION 3: *ON FASTING*

I. CONTENTS

1 introduction; varieties of fasting
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4-6 impure fasting: Jezebel and the Jezreelites
7 the Ninevites: an example of fasting from wickedness
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10-13 Mordecai, Esther, and Haman
10 fasting as a shield against evil; Haman's downfall
11-13 Haman as descendant of Amalek
14-15 Daniel's fast on behalf of his people
16 Christ's fast on behalf of his people

II. TRANSLATION

1. Pure fasting is highly acceptable[1] before God, and it is kept as a treasure in heaven.[2] It is a weapon against the Evil One, and a shield which receives the arrows[3] of the Adversary.[4] I do not speak

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[1] Syr. ; literally: "chosen", "approved"

[2] The only other place where Aphrahat refers to "treasure in heaven" is in 20.16, where Matthew 6:19-21 is quoted as an exhortation to assist the poor and the oppressed. It seems likely that the same ethical orientation applies here as well. At the end of the demonstration, mention is made of the attainment of the heavenly "rest" of Christ through "the power of pure fasting."

[3] A: "flaming arrows"

[4] Cf. Ephesians 6:16. Up to this point, the only mention of the Evil One/ Adversary/ Satan/ Enemy (all of these terms are used by Aphrahat)

about this by my own judgement, but rather from the holy scriptures, which have already shown us that fasting[5] has always been profitable for those who fast truly. Indeed my friend, fasting is not only [abstaining] from bread and water, for there are many ways to undertake a fast. There is the one who abstains[6] from bread and water to the point of being hungry and thirsty, but there is also the one who abstains in order to be a virgin, and who has hunger but does not eat, and has thirst but does not drink;[7] this fast is better. There is also the one who abstains through holiness, for this too is a fast, and there is the one who abstains from meat, from wine, and from certain foods. There is also the one who fasts by building a fence around his mouth, so as to avoid speaking hateful words,[8] and there is the one who abstains from anger, who crushes his desire [to get angry] so that he might not be conquered [by it]. There is the one who abstains from property, so that he might free him-

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has come in section 19 of the first demonstration, where "empty teachings" (which are said to be instruments of the Evil One) are included in the list of things to be avoided by the person of faith. It is here in the demonstration on fasting that the theme of spiritual combat is explicitly introduced. All the forms of fasting mentioned by Aphrahat are strategies in the war against the Evil One, and Christ himself is said to have conquered him through fasting (see section 16; an allusion to Christ's temptation in the wilderness). Those who do not have the right faith may fast, but are not rewarded for their piety, since they are under the deception of the Evil One (section 9). It is in demonstrations 6 and 7 that the theme of spiritual conflict finds its fullest expression, though it also appears in 14 and 23 in limited but significant ways. In the rest of the demonstrations, explicit mention of the Evil One (including his other titles) or spiritual combat is virtually absent.

[5] A: "pure fasting"

[6] I have translated the verb 'to fast' as 'to abstain' in this section, in order to give full weight to the non-literal forms of fasting to which Aphrahat himself gives weight.

[7] The "hunger" and "thirst" referred to here may be metaphorical, referring to sexual desire (in contrast to the previous line where the reference is clearly literal). Or, Aphrahat could be simply listing two kinds of fasts.

[8] A: "injurious words"

self for his work, and there is the one who abstains from any kind of bed, in order to remain wide awake in prayer. There is the one who, in suffering, keeps himself from the things of this world, so that he will not be harmed by the Adversary, and there is the one who abstains so that he might remain in mourning, in order to please his Lord in suffering. And [finally], there is the one who brings together all of these practices and makes them one fast. A person may abstain from nourishment until he is hungry, and while he abstains from eating and drinking he is called an abstainer. If he takes a little nourishment or if he drinks, he breaks his fast. Thus, if the person who abstains from all these things breaks from time to time any one of these fasts, then he is no longer considered to be fasting. The one who breaks only one of these is no longer considered an abstainer, any more than the one who eats and drinks with gluttony. The sin of the one who happens to break his fast because of hunger is not very serious. But the one who has vowed abstinence from all these things [mentioned above], and who ends up breaking with one thing or another, his sin is great, not small.

2. Hear then, my friend, how pure fasting is demonstrated. First of all, Abel demonstrated pure fasting in his offering. Enoch found favour before his God.[9] Noah kept his integrity in a corrupting generation.[10] Abraham excelled in his faith.[11] Isaac [demonstrated pure fasting] on account of the covenant of Abraham.[12] Jacob [demonstrated pure fasting] on account of the oath of Isaac, because he knew God.[13] Joseph [demonstrated pure fasting] through his compassion and his good administration. The purity of all these men was perfect fasting before God, since without purity of heart, fasting is not accepted.[14] Recall to mind and see, my friend, that it

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[9] Genesis 5:24 (Peshitta); Sirach 44:16; Hebrews 11:5

[10] Genesis 6:9

[11] Sirach 44:19

[12] Genesis 26:24; Sirach 44:22

[13] Genesis 32:25-33

[14] The use of these examples to make a point about fasting is striking, since there is no mention of literal fasting in the biblical passages that they

is an excellent thing when one purifies one's heart, when one guards one's tongue, and when one keeps one's hands from doing evil, as I wrote to you above.[15] It is not fitting for a man to mix honey with wormwood.[16] If, indeed, a person abstains from bread and water, let him not mix insults and curses with his fast.[17] For there is only one door to your house, which is the temple of God, and it is not appropriate, O human, that manure and mud should leave by this door through which the King enters. For when a person fasts from all these vile things, and receives the body and blood of Christ, let him keep watch over his mouth, through which the Son of the King enters. You do not have the right, O human, to cause impure speech to come out from your mouth. Listen to what our Lifegiver says: *"What enters a man cannot make him unclean. [It is] what comes out of the mouth that makes him unclean."* [18]

3. Moses also fasted purely when he went up the mountain and brought the Law to his people. He was strengthened from his [two] fasts of forty days[19] and he received an outstanding glory: the skin of his face became resplendent.[20] He diverted [God's] anger from his people, and they were not destroyed.[21] In a manner similar to Moses, Elijah, the man of strength, also fasted when he was pursued by Jezebel, and he journeyed as far as Horeb in his fast of

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are drawn from. Aphrahat distinguishes between fasting and the purity of heart which makes it acceptable, but the two concepts merge into each other when 'ordinary' fasting becomes 'pure' fasting.

[15] It is not clear what passage is being referred to here. Likely candidates can be found in 1.4, 1.19, 2.7, 2.11-14, or perhaps simply the previous section (3.1).

[16] Cf. Proverbs 5:3-4

[17] External observances are no guarantee of purity of heart: they are conditionally good, whereas pure fasting (i.e. purity of heart) is unconditionally good and forms the basis of the goodness of external observances.

[18] Matthew 15:11; Mark 7:14

[19] Exodus 24:18; 34: 28; Deuteronomy 9:18

[20] Exodus 34:29; 2Corinthians 3:7

[21] Exodus 32:11; 34:9.

forty days.[22] At the place where God conversed with Moses he also revealed himself to Elijah,[23] and commanded him, *"Go annoint Yahu, son of Yamshi, and Hazael, so that he might exercise vengeance on the Israelites, and Elisha, son of Shaphat, so that he might take your place."* [24] [Elijah] rejoiced in the revelation of his Lord in his perfect fast, just as Moses had rejoiced when he fasted twice for forty days, diverted the wrath of his God from his people, and brought down the tablets of the covenant, written by the finger of God.[25] For these two, in their fasting was their glory, and by it[26] they were made perfect.

4. Now I will also show you the fast of injustice and of the shedding of blood, which is not accepted: that which Jezebel decreed, she who was the instigator of Ahab, and the ruiner[27] of Israel.[28] She wrote a letter in the name of Ahab and sent it to the Jezreelites, impious men obeying the impious Jezebel.[29] Here is what she wrote in this impious letter: *"Decree a fast, make Naboth sit at the head of the people,*[30] *and place two impious men across from him, and let them witness against him and say, 'Naboth has reviled God and the king', so that he might be stoned and die."* [31] This, my friend, is what Jezebel wrote to them: *"Let two men witness against Naboth"*, as if she was sending

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[22] 1Kings 19:3-8

[23] Thus fasting is portrayed as a means by which to establish an intimate relationship with God. In the case of Moses, this relationship facilitates the giving of the Law.

[24] 1Kings 19:16

[25] Exodus 31:18

[26] B omits "was their glory, and by it". The reference to "glory" (Syr. ܫܘܒܚܐ) is absent perhaps because the word can also mean 'boast' or 'pride', which may have seemed inappropriate for Moses and Elijah. Here, pure fasting seems to be portrayed as the way to achieve perfection, but what Aphrahat probably means is that, insofar as one is fasting purely (and therefore has purity of heart) one *is* perfect.

[27] A: "the deceiver"; ܡܛܥܝܢܝܬܐ instead of ܡܛܒܥܢܝܬܐ

[28] 1Kings 22:25

[29] 1Kings 21:8

[30] A omits "make...people"

[31] 1Kings 21:9-10

them according to the holy Law.[32] For it is written in the Law, *"Let not the one who is condemned to death be killed on the word of one witness; but on the word of two witnesses he will die."* [33] And this is what is written: *"Let the witnesses be the first to stone him, and after that all the people."* [34] She also writes to them: *"In this way witness against him: 'Naboth has reviled God and the king.'"* Here again she writes to them in her impious letter as if what she says is in accordance with the holy Law. For it is written: *"He who has reviled the name of God will be stoned, for having pronounced the holy name and cursing it."* [35] Now Jezebel was not concerned about the name of God being blasphemed, but rather was caught up in the greed of Ahab, who was coveting Naboth's vineyard. And Ahab did not recall that it is written, *"You will not covet anything that belongs to your neighbour."* [36]

5. O Jezebel, ruiner[37] of Ahab,[38] who is this God whom Naboth has reviled? He is the one whose altar you have overturned and whose prophets you have killed![39] And who is this king he has reviled? He is the one who abolished the Law and who wished to take the heritage of Naboth by force. Why, therefore, Jezebel, have you not upheld that which is written at the head of the commandments of the Law, where it is written, *"You must not adore any foreign god"?* [40] You, Jezebel, serve Baal! It is also written, *"You must not shed*

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[32] Clearly, "holy Law" has a positive valency for Aphrahat, and the fact that Jezebel flaunts this Law is important for him. The fasting that she decrees is *not* in accordance with the Law, and is impure, unacceptable, and unprofitable (for this last adjective see section one, where Aphrahat points out that the "holy scriptures" have shown the profitability of pure fasting).

[33] Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15

[34] Deuteronomy 17:7

[35] Leviticus 24:16

[36] Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21

[37] A: "deceiver" (see note 27 above)

[38] 1Kings 22:25

[39] 1Kings 19:14

[40] Exodus 20:3

innocent blood on the land that the Lord your God has given you." [41] You should have remembered, O Jezebel, that it is written, *"The land on which blood has been shed will not be purified except by the blood of the one who has shed blood."* [42] But you were afraid of this, O Jezebel, and became full of impious zeal, [acting as if] Naboth had cursed God when he had not. It is also written, *"He who sheds the blood of a man, his blood will be shed."* [43] Jezebel, the provocator, has shed the innocent blood of Naboth. This is why, at the same place where Jezebel had shed innocent blood during the impure fast that was decreed, her own blood was shed and the dogs devoured her. And there the dogs also licked up the blood of Ahab, who had listened to her counsel.[44]

6. Even if Jezebel had chosen to subtract from the Law that which could have been used to indict her, since she was not keeping the Law, why did you, wicked men, Jezreelites, accept a letter in which an impious fast is prescribed, and false witnessing and the shedding of blood is decreed? In which generation have you heard [the decree], 'Fast, and shed innocent blood'? Why, therefore, did you not reject this impious letter and [the] false witnessing [commanded there]? Ahab and Jezebel were justly punished for having shed the innocent blood of Naboth, and the Israelites who had obeyed Jezebel were also punished justly. Indeed, Hosea prophesies and says, *"In a little while I will reckon with the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel."* [45] For Jehu exacted payment for the blood of Naboth from the hand of Jezebel and the house of Ahab, and he massacred the Jezreelites in the temple of Baal, for the blood of Naboth[46] had come upon them, as Jehu said on the day of punishment, *"This evening, I have seen the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons [paid for]."* [47]

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[41] Deuteronomy 19:10
[42] Numbers 35:33
[43] Genesis 9:6
[44] 1Kings 22:38
[45] Hosea 1:4
[46] A: "and the blood of his sons"
[47] 2Kings 9:26

There was vengeance for him and the fast that the Jezreelites fasted resulted in condemnation.

7. The Ninevites fasted with a pure fast when Jonah preached repentance to them. For as it is written, when they heard the preaching of Jonah, they decreed a permanent fast and unending supplication, while sitting on sackcloth and ashes. They removed their finery and put on sackcloth in its place. They withheld infants from the breasts of their mothers, and sheep and cattle from the pasture. Here is what is written: *"The news reached the king of Nineveh. Rising from his throne, he took off his crown, seated himself on sackcloth and covered his head with ashes. He made a proclamation in Nineveh his city: 'By order of the king and his nobles, men and livestock must not eat anything, nor will they graze or even drink water. Rather, they must be covered with sackcloth, men and livestock, and they must cry out to God with groaning, so that he might turn from us [his] anger and wrath, and not destroy [us].'"* [48] And this is also what is written: *"God saw their good deeds, that they were turning from their wicked ways. Then he turned his anger away from them and he did not destroy them."* [49] It does not say, 'He saw a fast from bread and water, with sackcloth and ashes,' but, *"they have turned from their evil ways and from the wickedness of their works."* For the king of Nineveh had proclaimed, *"Let [each] man turn from his wicked way and from the corrupt wealth which is in his hands."* [50] [This] was a pure fast, and the fast that the Ninevites fasted was accepted, when they turned from their wicked ways and from the corrupt wealth that was in their hands. The pure fast that the Ninevites fasted was pleasing, and it did not resemble the fast of the Jezreelites, in which innocent blood was shed.

8. For, my friend, when one fasts, fasting from wickedness is always more excellent than fasting from bread and water. It is also better than humbling oneself, and better than bending one's neck

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[48] Jonah 3:6-9
[49] Jonah 3:10
[50] Jonah 3:8

like a hook or covering[51] oneself with sackcloth and ashes, as Isaiah said.[52] Indeed, when a person abstains from bread, water, and all nourishment, and when he covers himself with sackcloth and ashes and when he mourns, he is lovely, virtuous, and beautiful. But this beauty is more excellent: when a person humbles himself and also loosens the chains of impiety and cuts the bonds of deceit.[53] Then *"his light will be opened like the sun, and his justice will march before him. He will be like a garden that flourishes, or like a spring whose water does not dry up."* [54] He does not resemble the hypocrites, who sadden their faces and disfigure their countenances and make their fast known.[55]

9. Observe that the deceptive schools, instruments of the Evil One, also fast and call to mind their sins, but there is no one to reward them.[56] Who, indeed, will reward Marcion, who does not acknowledge our good Creator? And who will reward Valentinus for his fasting, he who preaches that there are a number of crea-

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[51] Lit. "humbling"

[52] Isaiah 58:5. A has "the prophet Isaiah." It is important to note that for Aphrahat, the roots of the notion of 'fasting from wickedness' are found in the Old Testament. As with so many other aspects of his thought, the New Testament simply reaffirms or amplifies revelation already given in the Old.

[53] The reader is provided with a metaphorical description of pure fasting. However, the references to "impiety" and "deceit" are not intended to be metaphorical: behind these two realities stands the Evil One, against whom fasting is effective. It seems unlikely that Aphrahat would have said that a person could 'fast from wickedness' (which takes on an active rather than a passive meaning here) without first having humbled himself and having abstained from worldly attachments. In other words, although fasting from wickedness goes beyond the practices outlined in section 1, it is nevertheless rooted in them.

[54] Isaiah 58:6,8,10,11

[55] Matthew 5:16

[56] Syr. ܘܡܪܐ ܐܓܪܐ ܠܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ; literally: 'there is no paymaster for them'. Fasting is *not* "profitable" (cf. section 1) for heretics in Aphrahat's view: they are not rewarded. Asceticism means nothing, he is saying, without the proper faith.

tors, and who says that the perfect God cannot be described in words[57] and that the intellect cannot examine him? And who will give a reward to the sons of darkness, the school of the wicked Mani, who remain in the darkness like serpents and engage in astrology, the teaching of Babylon? Behold, all of these [people] fast! But their fast is not accepted.

10. Listen again, my friend. I will show you the acceptable fast which Mordecai and Esther[58] undertook. Their fast was a shield of salvation for all of their people. They made the boasting of Haman, the one troubling them, cease, and his impiety fell back on his own head. His treacherous plan fell upon him, and he was judged with the judgement he wanted to impose. By the measure with which he wanted to measure he was measured, and what he was planning to do was done to him. He was bound by the rope of his sins; the wealth of which he boasted did not accompany him and his wisdom did not save him. Because he conspired to do evil, his pride was humiliated, his dignity slipped away from him, his virtue was corrupted, and his manliness was humbled. With the blow with which he wanted to strike, he was struck, and he died by the death with which he had wanted to kill [others], since he had wanted to kill all the Jews who were under the dominion of king Ahasuerus. But the fast of Mordecai and Esther was a shield that received the arrows of Haman. Haman was caught in his own iniquity, and his destroying sword entered his own heart. His bow, loaded for iniquity, snapped, as it is written of the impious: *"Their swords will enter their own hearts and their bows will break."* [59] This has been fulfilled against Haman. Though he had prepared a gallows for Mordecai and his sons, [it was] Haman [who] was hung on it with his sons.[60] He was caught in the pit he had made, and snared by the trap that he had concealed. His net was cast upon himself; he fell into his snares of wickedness, and his end was eternal.

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[57] Lit. "spoken by the mouth"
[58] Esther 4:16.
[59] Psalm 37:15
[60] Esther 7:9-10

11. But why, my friend, did Haman demand and seek from the king that all the Jews be destroyed? It was because he wanted to avenge his people, and wipe out[61] the name of the Israelites, as the memory of Amalek had been wiped out[62] under heaven. For Haman remained as a remnant of the Amalekites. Here in fact is what is written: Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite,[63] was honoured by the house of king Ahasuerus. Mordecai was sitting every day in the court of the king[64] for the sake of his foster child Esther, who had been taken to king Ahasuerus and who was pleasing to him, more than all the maidens who were her companions. She had gone and sat in queen Vashti's place.[65] Every day Mordecai was rising early and sitting in the court of the king. Haman was the king's third in rank, and he was honoured in all his kingdom. Upon seeing Haman, each person in the court of the king would fall down and prostrate themselves, but Mordecai remained sitting in his presence.[66] Because of this, Haman wanted, under this pretext, to be avenged on Mordecai's people, and to exact payment from them for the slaying of the Amalekites.[67] For Haman was of the family of the house of Agag, king of the Amalekites, whom Saul brought back and whom Samuel cut to pieces before the Lord.[68] Mordecai was of the lineage of the house of Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, one of the descendants[69] of Kish.[70] Since Saul had destroyed the Amalekites, Haman wanted to take vengeance on Israel for his people, and [in particular] on Mordecai for the death of

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[61] A: "and [he wanted] the name of the Israelites to be forgotten" (ܢܫܟܚ instead of ܐܫܟܚ)

[62] A: "had been forgotten" (same variation as above)

[63] Esther 3:1, 10

[64] Esther 2:11, 19

[65] Esther 2:17

[66] Esther 3:2

[67] Esther 3:6

[68] 1Samuel 15:33

[69] Syr. ܒܢܝ ܩܝܫ . Literally, this would read "the children of Kish", but I have used "descendants" throughout this translation. Where ܙܪܥܐ is used, I have used the term "offspring" (cf. 7.6, 8.6, 11.11, etc.).

[70] Esther 2:5

Agag. But he did not know (his reason had left him) that there was a decree against Amalek, and that the memory of him would be wiped out under heaven. For it is written in the holy Law: *"God said to Moses, 'Tell Joshua son of Nun to choose some men and to make war against Amalek.'"* [71] Joshua armed himself and made war against Amalek,[72] and Amalek was defeated by the sign of the Cross, in the extension of the hands of Moses. While those who fell in the war were destroyed, there remained a remnant from their dwelling place. Then the Lord said to Moses, *"Write a book of remembrance and set it before Joshua son of Nun, for I am going to completely wipe out the memory of Amalek under heaven."* [73] But he demonstrated great patience with the Amalekites, so that perhaps they might hear that it it is written in the holy book of God that he has said, *"I am going to completely wipe out the Amalekites"*, and that they might return to him and that he might turn toward them. If only they had returned, and if only their repentance was like that of the Ninevites, who, when God warned them of destruction demonstrated repentance, and he turned his wrath from them! Or [if only] their repentance was like the promise given to the Gibeonites, who did not perish with the Caananites, or like the gift of repentance to Rahab, who believed! Repentance would have also been given to the Amalekites, if they had believed when God was patient with them for four hundred years. But after all this time, when he saw that they did not repent, his anger overcame them, and he remembered what Moses had inscribed in his holy book. For when Saul reigned over the kingdom, God said to Samuel, *"Tell him: I remember what Amalek has done to you when you came out of Egypt, when he attacked you with the sword. Now go and destroy the sin of Amalek."* [74] And Saul went and destroyed the

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[71] Exodus 17:9. "Holy Law" includes not only rules for conduct but also a record of God's actions in history.

[72] Aphrahat uses a collective noun to refer to the Amalekites, following the biblical usage. Elsewhere he refers to them with a gentilic form, for no apparent reason other than that this would be more typical of Syriac.

[73] Exodus 17:14

[74] 1Samuel 15:2-3

Amalekites. But because Saul had mercy on Amalek, his kingship was rejected, since he had left a remnant among them.[75] Haman was a remnant of the house of Agag, which Saul had allowed [to survive], and it was Mordecai, a descendant of the house of Saul, who destroyed the one from the house of Agag.[76]

12. There are those, my friend, who find fault with Mordecai and say, 'Why did he not rise in the presence of Haman, since he was honoured in all the kingdom? How would he have been harmed if he had given honour to him?' This is what these people say: 'If Mordecai had risen in the presence of Haman, this evil would not have been plotted against him and his people.' But it is the one who does not understand the significance of the matter who says these things. For Mordecai did this as a righteous man, who kept the Law.[77] He did not rise before Haman, a wicked man, because he was considering Saul, his ancestor, who was taken from his kingship and experienced the wrath [of God] because he gave mercy to king Agag, the ancestor of Haman. Likewise, if Mordecai had rendered honour to the impious Haman, [God's] wrath would have risen against him as it had against Saul.

13. But why, my friend, was it the Amalekites, more than all the [other] peoples, who came to meet Israel for war? For the Amalekites had thought, 'Let us go out and destroy the sons of Jacob and abolish the blessings of Isaac!' Indeed, they were afraid of the domination of the sons of Jacob, for this is what Isaac had said to Esau: *"You will serve Jacob your brother, but if you repent, his yoke will pass away from your neck."* [78] For this reason you ought to know that Amalek was the son of the concubine of Eliphaz, the son of

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[75] 1Samuel 15:10-23

[76] A: "Saul, he who destroyed the house of Agag"

[77] Once again great significance is attached to 'keeping the Law'. In the case of Mordecai, this means acting in accordance with God's decreed rejection of the Amalekites, who did not repent when God was patient with them.

[78] Genesis 27:40

Esau,[79] and he did not want to become enslaved to the sons of Jacob. Why, therefore, my friend, did Isaac say to Esau, *"You will serve Jacob your brother"* ? The scriptures indicate that it was because Esau had taken his wives from among the daughters of Caanan,[80] who was cursed by his father Noah. Here is what Noah said to him: *"You will be a servant of servants to your brothers."* [81] Abraham and Isaac, knowing that the Caananites had been cursed, did not take any of their daughters for their sons. Abraham did not take any for Isaac,[82] nor did Isaac for Jacob,[83] for the cursed lineage of the Caananites did not mingle with that of Shem, whom Noah had blessed. This is why Amalek, son of Eliphaz, son of Esau, wanted to abolish the curses of Noah and the blessings of Isaac, and fight with the sons of Jacob. But God had justly written concerning Amalek, that his memory would be wiped out by the sons of Rachel.[84] The first to fight against him was Joshua son of Nun, of the tribe of Joseph. Next it was Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, and the remanant of [the Amalekites] Mordecai destroyed by his fast.[85] Of all the sons of Esau, it was Amalek who wanted to fight with the sons on Jacob, and it was the memory of him that was wiped out. Notice that it was by the fast of Mordecai and Esther that Haman was thrown down from his greatness, and the remnant of the Amalekites was destroyed. Mordecai recieved the glory of Haman; he became great in the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, and Esther became queen in Vashti's place.

14. Daniel also fasted acceptably for three full weeks on behalf of his people, so that their time in Babylon would not be extended

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[79] Genesis 36:12

[80] Genesis 36:2

[81] Genesis 9:25

[82] Genesis 24:3

[83] Genesis 28:1

[84] Cf. Deuteronomy 25:19.

[85] Fasting is not only a defensive shield, but an offensive weapon too: Mordecai is an example of someone who 'loosened the chains of impiety' and 'cut the bonds of deceit' (cf. section 8).

beyond seventy years. And during his fast of twenty-one days, he was heard before his God, for during those days Gabriel, who receives prayer at all times, arose to help him.[86] And Michael, their prince, who was with Gabriel, also helped. They stood facing the prince of Persia for twenty-one days,[87] and [Gabriel] assisted Daniel during his fast. You should be aware, my friend, that Gabriel receives prayer before God. For when Daniel prayed, it was Gabriel who came to him and strengthened him, saying, *"Your prayer has been heard before God, and I have come in response to your words."* [88] He encouraged him by saying to him, *"Be strong, cherished man!"* [89] It was through the prayer of Daniel's fast that Gabriel came near to him. It was also Gabriel who presented the prayer of Zechariah before God. For when he announced the birth of John, he said to him, *"Your prayer has been heard before God."* [90] The prayer of Mary, also, was presented before God, and Gabriel announced to her the birth of Christ. For he said to her, *"You have found favour before God."* [91] And how did Mary find favour, if not by her fasting and prayer?[92] For it was Gabriel who was receiving pure prayers and presenting them before God. And it was Michael who was the prince of the Israelites. It was Michael about whom God spoke to Moses: *"Behold, my angel will go before you and will eliminate from before you the Amorites of the land."* [93] It was he who appeared to Balaam's donkey, when Balaam was going to curse Israel. He also appeared to Joshua son of Nun with his sword drawn, standing in the plain of Jericho. When Joshua saw him he thought that he was one of his adversaries, and said to him, *"Are you with us, or our enemies?"* Michael replied,

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[86] Daniel 9:20-23

[87] Daniel 10:13

[88] Daniel 10:12

[89] Daniel 10:11, 19. Syr. ܐܬܚܝܠ ܓܒܪܐ ܕܪܓܬܐ ; literally: "Be strong, man who is desired"

[90] Luke 1:13

[91] Luke 1:30

[92] A: "by her prayer and fasting"

[93] Exodus 23:20-23

"I am the leader of the armies of the Lord, and now I have come." [94] It was he who knocked down the walls of Jericho before Joshua son of Nun, and it was also he who destroyed the thirty-one kings before him. It was he who destroyed a multitude[95] of Ethiopians[96] before Asa, and who destroyed one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the camp of the Assyrians. And when the Israelites went to Babylon, he went with them, and fought on their behalf.

15. Why, my friend, did Daniel fast for those three full weeks and seek God and make supplication,[97] while it is not written that he had fasted previously? Here is what is written: seventy years had passed since the destruction of Jerusalem (as the prophet Jeremiah had said) when Daniel offered his prayer and made supplication before his God, so that they might not remain longer than seventy years in Babylon. Since God had taken away [years] from the generation in the days of Noah, and had added to the [years of the] Israelites in Egypt, and had taken away [years] from the Ephraimites, Daniel thought that because of their sins the people might have to remain in Babylon longer than the seventy years spoken by Jeremiah. Gabriel assisted [him] in his fast, as did Michael, their prince, for Michael, too, would have rest among them when they returned to their country. And Gabriel helped his people, so that the fruits of their prayers and offerings, which Gabriel presented each day before God, might multiply in the house of the sanctuary. But the prince of the realm of Persia did not wish that the holy lineage of Israel be separated from the wicked realm of Persia, which had been handed over to him by God. For as long as they were there, there was among them at least some righteous men in

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[94] Joshua 5:13-14

[95] Syr. ܐܠܦ ܐܠܦܝܢ ; literally: "a thousand thousands". The phrase refers to a generally large number, rather than the more precise "million".

[96] Syr. ܗܢܕܘܝܐ . The word used here has the same root as the modern word 'Hindu', and could refer to either African or Indian populations.

[97] A has ܡܬܟܢܦ ("be bent") instead of ܐܬܟܫܦ ("make supplication").

whom he rejoiced. Take notice! The acceptable fast of Daniel[98] was excellent, since he restored his captive people at the completion of seventy years.

16. But the leader of our army is greater than Gabriel, more excellent than Michael, and stronger than the Prince of Persia:[99] he is our Lifegiver, our Lord Jesus Christ, who has come and put on our humanity. He has suffered, and has been tempted in the flesh which he has received from us, and can therefore assist those who are tempted.[100] For he fasted on our behalf, and has conquered our Enemy.[101] He has commanded us to fast and to keep watch at all times, so that by the power of pure fasting, we might attain his rest.

The demonstration on fasting is completed.

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[98] A: "of God".
[99] Cf. Hebrews 1:4
[100] See Hebrews 4:15.
[101] Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13

DEMONSTRATION 4: *ON PRAYER*

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II. TRANSLATION

1. Purity of heart is a prayer more excellent than all prayers uttered in a loud voice, and silence, combined with a clear mind, surpasses the loud voice of the person who cries out. Now then, my friend, give me your heart and your mind. Hear [me as I speak to

you] concerning the strength of pure prayer, and see how our righteous fathers were renowned[1] for their prayer before God, and how prayer was for them a pure offering.[2] Indeed, it is by prayer that offerings have been accepted. Prayer is what caused the flood to recede. It also healed the barren woman, overcame encampments, unveiled mysteries, divided the sea, opened a breach in the Jordan, held back the sun and immobilized the moon, exterminated the impure and caused fire to fall, closed up the sky, brought [people] up from the pit, freed [them] from fire, and delivered [them] from the sea. Its strength is quite considerable, as considerable as the strength of pure fasting. And just as I have expounded clearly to you in my previous demonstration what the characteristics of fasting are, likewise, it is no trouble for me to convey and demonstrate to you what prayer is.

2. First of all, it was because of the purity of his heart that the offering of Abel was accepted before God while that of Cain was rejected.[3] But how can we know that the offering of Abel was accepted and that of Cain rejected? How did Abel know that his offering was accepted, and how did Cain know that his was rejected? I will expound on this as I am able. You know, my friend, how one discerns that an offering is accepted before God: fire descends from heaven and consumes the offering. Now, while Abel and Cain presented their offerings at the same time, a living fire which performs its service before God descended to devour the sacrifice of Abel. But the fire did not touch [the offering] of Cain, which was not pure. This is how Abel knew that his sacrifice had been accepted, and how Cain knew that his had been rejected. And the fruits of Cain's heart showed and testified about him that he was full of deceit, since he killed his brother. For what his thought had

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[1] Syr. ܫܝܒܚ . The term could also be translated as "triumphed".

[2] Cf. Malachi 1:11

[3] Genesis 4:4-5. Cain and Abel's presentation of offerings to God is seen as a form of prayer.

conceived his hands carried out, whereas the purity of the heart of Abel was his prayer.[4]

3. What I will expound now, my friend, is that all acceptable sacrifices were consumed by fire. When Manoah, the father of Samson, presented an offering, living fire came down and consumed it, and it was in the flame that the angel who had spoken with him returned to heaven.[5] Likewise with Abraham: when God made to him a firm promise that a son would be born to him, He said, *"Take a three year old heifer, a three year old goat, a turtledove, and a pigeon."* [6] After Abraham had sacrificed them, having cut them [in two] and placed each part against its pair, sleep fell upon him, and a fire descended, passed between the pieces, and consumed the offering of Abraham.[7] Likewise with the offerings which were offered in the tabernacle: a living fire descended to consume them.[8] A similar thing happened in the case of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, who were negligent in the presentation of the offering. Fire descended as usual at the time of the offering but it did not find their offerings to be pure, and it did not accept them. Seeing that the offering had not been consumed, they brought fire from outside to consume it, so that they might not be blamed by Moses, [who would ask,] 'Why has the offering not been consumed?' The fire from outside consumed the offering, but the fire from heaven consumed them,[9] and the Lord displayed in them his holiness, since they had been negligent in his service. Furthermore, when two hundred and fifty men gathered against Moses and offered incense without [having received] a command [to do so], the fire

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[4] Thus Cain's offering is not rejected because of what it is in itself (vegetables as opposed to meat), but because Cain himself had an impure heart. As in the case of fasting, we see here a spiritualizing of prayer, so that 'purity of heart' becomes a form of prayer.

[5] Judges 13:20

[6] Genesis 15:9

[7] Genesis 15:17

[8] Leviticus 9:24

[9] Leviticus 10:2

was commanded and came from before the Lord and devoured them: their incense was sanctified by their own lives.[10] Also, when Solomon constructed the temple and presented his offerings and oblations, he prayed, and fire came down from heaven and consumed the fat of the burnt offering on the altar.[11] And when Elijah presented an offering, fire descended to consume it,[12] and his offering was accepted like that of Abel, but the offering of the servants of Baal was rejected like that of Cain. I have recited all these examples having to do with fire so that you might be sure that it was fire that consumed the offering of Abel.

4. Listen, my friend, concerning this pure prayer and what powers are displayed in it. After Abraham had prayed, he brought back the spoils of five kings,[13] and [his] barren [wife] gave birth through his prayer.[14] Moreover, through the power of his prayer he received the promise that the peoples would be blessed through his seed.[15] Isaac also demonstrated the power of prayer when he prayed over Rebecca, and she gave birth.[16] [He also prayed] for Abimelech, and the wrath of God was held back from him.[17]

5. Likewise with our father Jacob: he prayed at Bethel, and he saw the gate[18] of heaven open, and a ladder going up to the heights.[19] It was a symbol of our Saviour that Jacob saw. The gate to heaven is Christ, as He said: *"I am the gate to life; whoever enters by*

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[10] Numbers 16:35
[11] 2Chronicles 7:1
[12] 1Kings 18:38
[13] Cf. Genesis 14:16 (no biblical reference to prayer)
[14] Cf. Genesis 21:1-7 (no biblical reference to prayer)
[15] Cf. Genesis 22:18 (no biblical reference to prayer)
[16] Genesis 25:21
[17] Cf. Genesis 20:17 and 26:6-11
[18] Syr. ܬܪܥܐ . Depending on the context, this term can also be translated as "door". In this case, heaven is probably being pictured as a either as a temple or as a city, in which case "gate" works better (I owe this observation to Harry Fox).
[19] Cf. Genesis 28:12 (no biblical reference to prayer)

me will live forever." [20] And David, too, said, *"This is the gate of the Lord by which the righteous enter."* [21] And the ladder which Jacob saw, this is also the symbol of our Saviour, by whom all righteous people rise from below to the heights. It is also the symbol of the Cross of our Saviour, who was lifted up like a ladder. And the Lord stands above it, for above Christ is the Lord of all, as the blessed apostle said: *"The head of Christ is God."* [22] Jacob called that place Bethel, and he erected a standing stone there in remembrance, the head of which he annointed with oil. Our father Jacob did this symbolically, in advance, to represent the rocks which receive anointing. For the peoples who have believed in Christ are the ones who are annointed, as John said concerning them, *"From these rocks, God can raise up sons for Abraham."* [23] Thus, the symbol of the calling of the peoples was shown in advance by the prayer of Jacob.

6. See, therefore, my friend, how many symbols were hidden in this vision which Jacob saw: he saw a gate to heaven, which is Christ; he saw a ladder, a symbol of the Cross; he annointed the rocks, which is a type of the peoples. He dedicated the tithe to give to Levi,[24] for in Jacob was hidden both givers of tithes and recipients of firstfruits. In his loins was the child of the lion of Judah,[25] in whom was hidden Christ the King, and in him he pointed to the annointing [of baptism]. The tribes who were in him dedicated firstfruits to the Levites, the kings who were in his loins enlarged his heart, and in him the spirit of the prophets examined those who were going to come into being from his seed. With only his staff, he crossed the Jordan.[26] In advance, he held in his hand a wondrous symbol: the sign of the Cross of the Great Prophet. Then he directed his feet to the land of the people of the east, since from

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[20] John 10:9
[21] Psalm 118:20
[22] 1Corinthians 11:3
[23] Luke 3:8
[24] Genesis 28:22
[25] Hebrews 7:9-10; Genesis 49:9
[26] Genesis 32:10

there shone forth light for the peoples.[27] He rested by a well with a stone over its mouth, which many [men] had not been able to lift. For many shepherds had not been able to move the stone in order to open the well, until Jacob came.[28] By the strength of the Shepherd who was hidden in his loins he moved the stone and watered his sheep. Many prophets had come who had not been able to reveal [the mystery of] baptism, until the Great Prophet came who alone could open it, and who was baptised in it, and who announced in a gentle[29] voice, *"Whoever has thirst, let them come to me and drink."* [30] Jacob prayed again upon his return from Laban, and he was saved from his brother Esau. He prayed and gave thanks and spoke in this way: *"I have crossed this [river] Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two camps."* [31] What a wonderful symbol of our Saviour! When our Lord came for the first time, the staff came out from the trunk of Jesse,[32] similar to the staff of Jacob. But when he returns from his Father's house at his second coming, two camps will go with him, one from the People, and another from the Peoples, [which is] similar to [what happened with] Jacob, who returned to the house of his father Isaac with two camps. For Jacob returned with his eleven sons, and with our Saviour will come his eleven disciples, since Judas will not be with them. Later, Benjamin was born and there were twelve sons of Jacob. Afterwards, Tolmai[33] was appointed and there were twelve disciples of our Saviour. This was the effect of the prayer of Jacob.

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[27] Luke 2:32

[28] Genesis 29:8-10

[29] Syr. ܚܫܝܚܐ . The same adjective is used in 9.4 to describe the "songs of Christ"; there I translated the term as "melodious". Cf. 6.6: "Instead of the groans of the daughters of Eve they [the female covenanters] utter the songs of the Bridegroom."

[30] John 7:37

[31] Gen. 32:10

[32] cf. Isaiah 11:1

[33] Early Syriac tradition has this name instead of Matthias, found in the Greek text of the Gospels.

7. What should we say about the strength of the prayer of Moses, which is without limit? For his prayer delivered him from the hands of Pharoah, and it showed him the Shekinah[34] of his God,[35] and by his prayer he inflicted ten plagues on Pharoah.[36] His prayer also divided the sea,[37] sweetened the bitter water,[38] caused manna to come down and the quails to fly,[39] split the rock and made the waters flow,[40] conquered Amalek and gave strength to Joshua,[41] threw confusion over Og and Sihon during battle,[42] made the wicked descend to Sheol,[43] turned away the wrath of God from his people[44] and ground up the calf of sin,[45] brought the tablets down from the mountain and made his face brilliant.[46] For there is more to say about his prayer than about the prayer of Jacob. Joshua son of Nun also had great success by his prayer before God. His prayer divided the Jordan,[47] knocked down the walls of Jericho,[48]

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[34] Syr. ܫܟܝܢܬܐ . The term is also used in 8.9, 18.4, and 19.4. It refers to God's presence or, more specifically, God's dwelling-place. Ephrem uses the term to refer to the divine presence at the summit of Paradise (see Sebastian Brock, *St Ephrem the Syrian. Hymns on Paradise* (Crestwood, 1990), p. 52).

[35] Cf. Exodus 3:1-6. The extent of Moses' prayer in this passage is "Here I am!"

[36] Cf. Exodus 7-11. God instructs Moses, but there is no reference to Moses actually praying.

[37] Cf. Exodus 14:15-29. Moses' prayer is implied by God's question, "Why are you calling out to me?"

[38] Exodus 15:22-25

[39] Cf. Exodus 16:1-35. In this passage, God speaks to Moses but there is no record of Moses praying.

[40] Exodus 17:1-7; Numbers 20:1-11

[41] Cf. Exodus 17:8-13 (no biblical reference to prayer)

[42] Cf. Numbers 21:21-35 (no biblical reference to prayer)

[43] Numbers 16:31. God speaks to Moses, and Moses speaks to the people.

[44] Exodus 32:20-32

[45] Exodus 32:20 (no biblical reference to prayer, but Moses had been talking with God on Mt. Sinai)

[46] Exodus 34:29

[47] Joshua 3:16-17 (God speaks to Joshua, and Joshua speaks to the

and brought trouble to [Achan in the Valley of] Achor.[49] It held back the sun and immobilized the moon,[50] eliminated kings and subdued the country,[51] and caused the Israelites to inherit [the land].

8. We come now to the silent prayer which Hannah, the mother of Samuel, prayed. It was pleasing before God, and opened up her barren womb.[52] It made her disgrace pass away, and she gave birth to a nazirite and a priest.[53] Samuel also prayed before his God when he showed the Israelites a sign (thus informing them of their sins, since they had demanded a king): Samuel placed an oblation on the altar, and the rain began to fall on the days of the harvest of the wheat.[54] David also prayed before his God, and he was delivered from the hand of Saul.[55] He also prayed when he had counted the people; wrath and fury were turned away from them, when the destroying angel had come upon them.[56] Asa prayed also, and his prayer proved to be very effective when Zerah the Ethiopian came against him with a massive army. At that time, Asa prayed: "In this your strength will be known, our God, when you hand over a numerous people into the hands of a small people." God heard his prayer, and he sent his angel who threw them into confusion, and the strong army was defeated by the strength of the prayer of Asa.[57] The prayer of Jehoshaphat, the son of [Asa], also wiped out the army of his adversaries and conquered them.[58] Hezekiah also

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people)

[48] Joshua 6:1-20 (again, God speaks to Joshua, and Joshua speaks to the people)

[49] Joshua 7. Here Joshua does actually pray in vv. 7-9.

[50] Joshua 10: 11-14

[51] Cf. Joshua 12 (no biblical reference to prayer)

[52] Syr. ܘܦܬܚܬ ܥܩܪܘܬܗ ; literally: "opened up her barrenness"

[53] 1Samuel 1

[54] 1Samuel 12:17-18

[55] 1Samuel 23:9-14

[56] 2Samuel 24:25

[57] 2Chronicles 14:9-15

[58] 2Chronicles 20:3-30

prayed, and his prayer destroyed one hundred and eighty-five thousand men by the hand of the angel [who was] the leader of [his] troops.[59] Jonah also prayed to his God, from the depths of the sea.[60] He was heard and answered, and he escaped without harm. For his prayer penetrated the abyss, conquered the waves, and was stronger than the tempestuous sea. It pierced the clouds,[61] flew on the air, opened heaven and approached the throne of majesty, through Gabriel who presents prayers before God. Then the depths spat out the prophetic man and the fish set Jonah free onto dry land. And [in the case of] Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, their prayer conquered the flames, weakened the strength of the fire, and changed its hot condition. It curbed the wrath of the king and set the righteous men free.[62]

9. Daniel also prayed, and his prayer closed the mouths of the lions.[63] Their hungry mouths were closed to the flesh and bones of the righteous man. The lions stretched out their paws[64] and received Daniel so that he might not fall on the ground. They held him in their limbs and kissed his feet. When Daniel rose to pray in the den, they stretched out their paws to heaven, [following] the example of Daniel. The one who receives prayers came down to them, and he closed the mouths of the lions. For Daniel said to Darius, *"My God has sent his angel to close the mouths of the lions, and they have not done me any harm."* [65] The den, certainly, was covered and sealed, but the light shone inside. And the lions were happy, since they had seen the light because of Daniel. Then, when Daniel grew sleepy and wanted to lie down, the lions lay flat, so that he might lie down on them and not on the ground. The den was illuminated more than a upper room with many windows, since there he multi-

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[59] 1Kings 19:15, 35
[60] Jonah 2
[61] Sirach 35:20-21
[62] Daniel 3
[63] Daniel 6
[64] Syr. ܐܝܕܝܗܘܢ , "their hands"
[65] Daniel 6:22

plied his prayers more than in his upper room, where he only prayed three times a day. Daniel came up vindicated, but his accusers fell in his place, and the mouths of the lions were opened, and they devoured them and broke their bones into pieces. Moreover, his prayer caused the return from the captivity in Babylon at the end of seventy years.[66] Each of our righteous fathers, at the time when tribulation came upon him, put on the armour of prayer, and through it was delivered from tribulation.

10. Our Saviour has also taught about prayer, and said, *"Pray in secret to the Hidden One who sees all."* For he said, *"Enter the inner chamber and pray to your Father in secret, and the Father, who sees what is hidden, will reward you."* [67] Why, my friend, did our Saviour teach and say, *"Pray to your Father in secret* [68] *while the door is closed"* ? I will explain this to you, as far as I understand it. He said, *"Pray to your Father in secret while the door is closed."* This is what the word of our Saviour shows us: pray in secret in your heart, and close the door. What door did he say to close, if not your mouth? For this is the temple in which Christ dwells, as the apostle says, *"You are the temple of the Lord,"* [69] so that he might enter into your inner man, this house, and purify it from every impurity, while the door (the mouth) is closed. And if this is not the case, how can you understand this verse? For if by chance you find yourself in the country, where there is neither house nor door, are you not able to pray in secret? And if by chance you find yourself on the top of a mountain, are you not able to pray? What our Saviour showed was that God knows the desires and intentions of the heart, as our Lord has written: *"Your Father knows before you ask him what you require."* [70] And it is written in the prophet Isaiah, *"Before they cry out, I will hear those who are my chosen, and before they call for help, I will answer them."* [71] Isaiah

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[66] Daniel 9:23
[67] Matthew 6:6
[68] A omits "in secret"
[69] 1Corinthians 3:16
[70] Matthew 6:8
[71] Isaiah 65:24

also said, concerning the impious, *"Even if you multiply your prayers, I will not listen."* [72] Again he said, *"They will cry out in my ears in a loud voice, but I will not hear them."* [73] This is what he said about deceitful prayer, which is not accepted. Hear all of these words with discernment; you will then also understand their significance.

11. Our Lifegiver said another word, which must be heard with discernment. For He said, *"At the place where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in their midst."* [74] How do you understand this word, my friend? This is what our Lifegiver said: *"At the place where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in their midst."* But if you are alone, is Christ not with you? It is written that Christ lives in those who believe in him, and this shows that even before there is two or three together, Christ is with them. And I am going to show you that there is an example in which instead of two or three there is more than a thousand gathered in the name of Christ, but Christ is not with them. And there is an example of a man who is alone, and Christ is with him. This word which our Lifegiver said is pleasing and beautiful to those who hear it, for He said, *"At the place where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."* When a person gathers his soul in the name of Christ, Christ lives in him, and God[75] lives in Christ. Thus, he becomes one of three persons: himself, Christ who lives in him, and God who lives in Christ, as our Lord said: *"I am in my Father and my Father is in me."* [76] And He said, *"I and my Father are one."* [77] And again He said, *"You are in me and I am in you."* [78] Again, He said through the prophet, *"I will live in*

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[72] Isaiah 1:15

[73] Ezekiel 8:18

[74] Matthew 18:20

[75] Here and at the next occurrence of the word "God", A has erased the originals and changed them to "Father".

[76] John 14:10-11

[77] John 10:30

[78] John 14:20

them and I will walk with them." [79] It is in this way that you can understand this word which our Lifegiver spoke.

12. I am now going to demonstrate to you, my friend, that God was with each of our righteous fathers who prayed.[80] For when Moses prayed on the mountain,[81] he was alone, but God was with him. And it was not the case that he was not heard because he was alone. On the contrary, the prayer of Moses was heard all the more, and it calmed the wrath of his God. Elijah was also alone, on Mount Carmel, and his prayer demonstrated amazing power.[82] For by his prayer the sky was closed,[83] and again by his prayer the fetters [of the sky] were loosed.[84] His prayer liberated from the hands of death and snatched away from Sheol,[85] and his prayer also cleansed impurity from Israel. His prayer made fire descend three times: once on the altar and twice on the nobles.[86] And when the fire fell through his prayer, it avenged him. He bent down on his knees and prayed, and he was answered quickly, but the four hundred and fifty who cried out in a loud voice were not heard, since they made their request in the name of Baal. Elijah was heard all the more while he was alone! The prophet Jonah was also heard when he prayed from the very bottom of Sheol.[87] While he was alone, he was quickly heard and answered. Elisha also prayed and brought back [someone] from Sheol, and was delivered from the hands of the evil people who encircled him. He appeared to be alone, but a great army surrounded him. For he said to his disciple, *"Those who are with us are greater than those who are with them."* [88] For

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[79] Leviticus 26:12; Ezekiel 49: 9; 2Corinthians 6:16
[80] A: "when they prayed"
[81] Exodus 32:30-33
[82] 1Kings 18:36-39
[83] 1Kings 17:1-7
[84] 1Kings 18:41-45
[85] 1Kings 17:17-24
[86] Sirach 48:3 (Peshitta); cf. 1Kings 18:38
[87] Syr. ܡܢ ܥܡܘܩ ܫܝܘܠܐ . Jonah 2:2-4
[88] 2Kings 6:16

while they were alone, they were not [really] alone. With what I have explained to you, you are able to understand the word of our Lord, who said, *"At the place where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them."*

13. As I have explained to you above, when you pray, direct your heart upward, and your eyes downward, and enter into the midst of your inner person, and pray in secret to your Father in heaven. I have written all these things to you on the topic of prayer (that when it is pure it is heard, but when it is not pure it is not heard[89]) because there are among us people who multiply prayers, prolong supplication, bend themselves over, and spread out their hands, yet the works of prayer[90] are far from them. For they pray the prayer that our Lifegiver taught: *"Forgive us our debts, as we also will forgive our debtors."* [91] O you who pray, remember that you are bringing an offering before God! Will not the one who presents prayers be ashamed of an offering that has a blemish in it? When you pray in order to be forgiven, and profess to forgive [others], first consider in your mind if you [really do] forgive, and then make your profession, 'I forgive.' You must not act deceptively with God[92] and say 'I forgive' when you do not forgive, for God is not a man like you, so that you might deceive him. *"If a man sins against a man, he can appeal to the Lord. But when a person offends God, to whom will he appeal?"* [93] Do not bring condemnation upon yourself because of your prayer. Listen again to what our Lord said: *"When you bring an offering and remember that you hold a grudge against your brother, leave your offering before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and bring your offering."* [94] In this way, you will not remember that you hold a grudge while you are [already] praying. If such a thing happens, you

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[89] A: "not accepted"

[90] A reference to the good works that prayer is meant to strengthen, especially forgiveness.

[91] Matthew 6:12

[92] A: "the living God"

[93] 1Samuel 2:25

[94] Matthew 5:23-24

may assume that your prayer has been left before the altar, and that the one who presents prayers [before God] does not wish to take it up from the earth because he has inspected [your] offering for blemishes. But if it is pure, he lifts it up before God, and if he finds 'forgive me and I will forgive' in your prayer, this is what is said by the one who raises up prayers to the one who prays: 'First forgive your debtor, and then I will raise up your [prayer] to your creditor. You, in your poverty, forgive [the debt] of one hundred denarii, and your creditor, in his greatness, will forgive your [debt] of ten thousand talents, and will not expect repayment or interest from you.' Thus, if you are willing and you forgive, the one who presents prayers will receive your offering and take it up with him. But if you do not forgive, he will say to you, 'I will not carry an impure offering before the seat of the Holy One. But you will go there to give an account to your Creditor, and you will take your offering with you.' And he will leave your offering and go away. Listen to the prophet, who said, *"Cursed is the one who has a good ram in his sheepfold, yet vows and sacrifices to the Lord an unhealthy one."* [95] For he said, *"Offer it to the one who rules over you, and see if he is pleased with you or shows favouritism to you."* [96] Thus, you ought to forgive your debtor before prayer, and then pray. And when you pray, your prayer will rise up to God above, and will not be left on the earth.

14. It says in the prophet, *"This is my rest: give rest to the weary."* [97] Therefore, bring about the rest of God, O human, and there will be no need for you [to say] 'Forgive me.' Give rest to the weary, visit the sick, and provide for the poor: this is prayer.[98] I will persuade you, my friend, that whenever a person brings about the rest of God, it is prayer. For it is written: *"When Zimri had sexual relations with the Midianite woman, Phineas son of Eliazar saw him and went into the chamber and killed both of them."* [99] [His] killing of them was consid-

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[95] Malachi 1:14
[96] Malachi 1:8
[97] Isaiah 28:12
[98] A: "perfect prayer"
[99] Numbers 25:6-8

ered prayer, for David speaks of him as follows: *"Phineas arose and prayed, and it was considered justification for him, for generations and forever."* [100] His killing was considered prayer because he killed them for the sake of his God. Watch out, my friend, that, when an opportunity for giving rest to the will of God comes to you, you do not say, 'The time for prayer is at hand. I will pray and then I will act.' For while you are trying to finish your prayer, the opportunity for bringing about rest will have slipped away from you, and your ability to bring about the will and the rest of God will have been diminished. Through your prayer you will be guilty of sin. However, if you bring about the rest of God, it will be [considered] prayer.

15. Listen to what the apostle has said: *"If we judge ourselves, we will not be judged."* [101] Judge within yourself what I say to you: suppose you happen to go on a long journey and become thirsty in the heat, and [then] encounter one of the brothers and say to him, 'Relieve me from the exhaustion of thirst', and he says to you, 'It is the time of prayer; I will pray and then I will come to you.' But while he is praying and coming to you, you die of thirst. What seems better to you? Should he leave to pray, or relieve your exhaustion? Again, suppose you go on a journey in the winter and rain and snow fall on you, and you become exhausted from the cold. Again, at the time of prayer you happen to meet your friend, and he answers you in the same way, and you die from the cold. What good is his prayer, which did not relieve [your] exhaustion? For our Lord, when he described the time of judgement (when he would divide [people] and make [them] stand on his right and on his left), [said that] he would say to those on his right, *"I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was sick and you visited me. I was a stranger and you invited me in."* [102] He spoke like this to those on his left also, but because they had not done

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[100] Psalm 106:30-31
[101] 1Corinthians 11:31
[102] Matthew 25:35-36

these things, he sent them to torment, and those on his right he sent to the kingdom.

16. Prayer is virtuous, and its achievements are excellent. Prayer is accepted when it provides rest, and heard when forgiveness is found in it. Prayer is cherished when it is free from all deceptions, and powerful when it is perfected by the might of God. I have written to you, my friend, that a person should do the will of God, and that this is prayer, for it seems to me that this is excellent. However, do not stop praying because of what I have said to you, but rather be even more diligent in prayer, and do not grow weary, since it is written that[103] our Lord said, *"Continue to pray and do not grow weary."* [104] Be diligent in watchfulness, and remove from yourself drowsiness and sluggishness. Be vigilant by day and by night, and do not become discouraged.

17. Now I will explain to you the occasions for prayer. For there is petition, thanksgiving, and praise. In petition, one seeks mercy for one's sins. In thanksgiving you give thanks to your Father in heaven, and in praise you praise him for his works. When you face adversity, offer up petition. When you are provided for from his good things, give thanks to the Giver. And when [your] mind is joyful, offer up praise. But pray all of your prayers with discernment before God. Observe that David too would speak thus at all times: *"I have risen up to give thanks to you for your judgements, O Righteous One."* [105] And in another psalm he said, *"Praise the Lord from heaven; praise him on the heights."* [106] And again he said, *"I will bless the Lord, at all times, and at all times [will] his praises [be] in my mouth."* [107] Do not pray in one way only, except with discernment.

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[103] A omits "it is written that"
[104] Luke 18:1
[105] Psalm 119:62
[106] Psalm 148:1
[107] Psalm 34:1

18. I am sure, my friend, that everything that people ask for with diligence, God gives to them. But he is not pleased with the one who offers [prayer] in jest,[108] as it is written: *"Now this is required of the one who prays, who offers up prayer: he should carefully inspect his offering, in case he should find a blemish on it, and then he should offer it."* [109] This is so that your offering does not remain on the earth. What is meant by "offering" if not prayer, as I wrote to you above? For David said, *"Make a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord, and fulfill your vows to the Most High."* [110] For among all offerings, pure prayer is the best. Be eager therefore, my friend, for prayer which speaks with God on your behalf. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, when he informed the Israelites of their sins, he called them *"rulers of Sodom"* [111] instead of *"children that I have taught and raised,"* [112] for they had exchanged their honour for shame. Above, Isaiah described them as *"children that I have taught and raised,"* but later in the passage he described them as *"rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah."* [113] They did not listen to the prophet's message when he said to them, *"Their land is desolate, and their towns are burned with fire."* [114] Then he called them *"rulers of Sodom"* and *"people of Gomorrah."* Then they picked up and brought their offerings in order to be pardoned, but their offerings were not accepted, for their wickedness was great, as with the house of Eli the priest. For it says in scripture, *"The wickedness of the house of Eli will not be pardoned by sacrifices and offerings."* [115] The same decree fell on the Israelites, for Isaiah said to them, *"What is your multitude of sacrifices to me? says the Lord. I have had enough of [your] offerings of rams and the fat of fattened calves and the blood of bulls, nor do I want young goats. Who requested these things from you?"* [116] They

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[108] A has ܕܒܩܘܠܝܢ, "listlessly"
[109] Cf. Matthew 5:23-24
[110] Psalm 50:14
[111] Isaiah 1:10
[112] Isaiah 1:2
[113] Isaiah 1:10
[114] Isaiah 1:7
[115] 1Samuel 3:14
[116] Isaiah 1:11-12

said to him, *"Why did you request [them] and why are our offerings not acceptable?"* And the prophet said to them, *"It is because your hands are full of blood."* [117] They said to him, *"What can we do?",* and he said, *"Wash and be cleansed, and remove the evils of your actions from before my eyes. Withdraw from evil and learn to be good. Seek out [good] judgement and do good to the oppressed. Judge [on behalf of] orphans and widows."* [118] They said to the prophet, "When we have done these things, what will become of us?" He said to them, *"Thus says the Lord: When you have done these things, come, and we will speak with each other."* [119] And how do people speak with God, except with unblemished prayer? For [prayer] that has a blemish in it does not speak with God. As it is written, He said in reply, *"Even if you multiply prayer I will not listen, since your hands are full of blood."* [120] And He said to them, *"When you have washed yourselves and we have spoken with each other, if your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow, and if they are as red as scarlet, they will become like wool. And if you obey and listen to me, you will enjoy the choice produce of the earth. But if you do not obey and dispute [with me], you will be destroyed by the sword. The mouth of the Lord has spoken."* [121]

19. What glorious mysteries Isaiah saw in advance! For he said to them, *"Your hands are full of blood."* What is this blood which Isaiah saw in advance, if not the blood of Christ which they took upon themselves and on their children, and the blood of the prophets whom they killed? It is this blood that is as red as scarlet and crimson and has marked them, and they cannot be cleansed unless they bathe in the waters of baptism and receive the body and blood of Christ. Blood is atoned for by the Blood, and body is purified by the Body. Sins are washed away in water, and prayer speaks with [God's] majesty. Observe, my friend, that sacrifices and offerings have been rejected, and that prayer has been chosen instead. From

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[117] Isaiah 1:12-15
[118] Isaiah 1:16-17
[119] Isaiah 1:18
[120] Isaiah 1:15
[121] Isaiah 1:18-20

now on, love pure prayer, and keep working at petition, and at the beginning of all your prayers, pray the prayer of your Lord. Be eager concerning all that I have written you, and whenever you pray, remember your friend.

The demonstration on prayer is completed.

DEMONSTRATION 5: *ON WARS*

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II. TRANSLATION

1. These thoughts have come to me at this time about the turmoil that is about to erupt at this time and [about] the army that has gathered itself for war. The times have been set in place beforehand by God: the times of peace are fulfilled in the days of the good and the just, while the times of many evils are fulfilled in the days of the evil and the wicked. For it is written, *"Good things will happen, and blessed is the one through whom they come. Evil things will also happen, but woe to the one through whom they come."*[1] Prosperity has come to the people of God, and a blessing remains for the one through whom this prosperity has come. But disaster looms against the army gathered by the evil and proud [one] who boasts, and misery waits there for the one through whom this disaster has been stirred up. However, my friend, do not find fault with the evil person who has inflicted evil upon many, because the times were set in place beforehand and the time of their fulfillment has arrived.

2. Therefore, because the time is evil, understand in a symbolic way[2] what I am writing to you. For it is written, *"That which is exalted among humans is despised before God."*[3] It is also written, *"Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and everyone who humbles himself will be exalted."*[4] Jeremiah also said, *"Let not the mighty one boast in his strength, nor the rich one in his wealth."*[5] And the blessed apostle said, *"Whoever boasts, let him boast in the Lord."*[6] Furthermore, David said, *"I saw a*

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[1] Matthew 18:7
[2] Syr. ܒܐܪܙ. Cf. 4.5: "Our father Jacob did this symbolically…"
[3] Proverbs 16:5
[4] Matthew 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14
[5] Jeremiah 9:23
[6] 2Corinthians 10:17

wicked [man] who was exalted and lifted up like a cedar of Lebanon, but when I passed by he was not there; I looked for him but could not find him." [7]

3. Everyone who has glorified himself [8] has been humbled. Cain glorified himself over Abel his brother and killed him, but he was cursed and he moved and wandered to and fro across the earth.[9] The Sodomites glorified themselves over Lot. Fire from heaven fell on them and they were consumed; their city was thrown down upon them.[10] Esau glorified himself over Jacob and persecuted him, but Jacob received the birthright and the blessings of Esau.[11] The sons of Jacob glorified themselves over Joseph, but in Egypt they fell down and revered him.[12] Pharoah glorified himself over Moses and his people, but Pharoah and his army were drowned in the sea.[13] Dathan and Abiram glorified themselves over Moses, but they went down alive to Sheol.[14] Goliath threatened David, but he fell before him and was defeated.[15] Saul persecuted David, but he fell by the sword of the Philistines.[16] Absalom exalted himself over [David], and Joab killed him in battle.[17] Ben-Hadad glorified himself over Ahab, but he was delivered into the hand of Israel.[18] Sennacherib insulted Hezekiah and his God, but his army became dead corpses when one of the watchers went out and destroyed one-hundred and eighty-five thousand [men] in the camp in response to

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[7] Psalm 37:35-36

[8] Syr. ܐܡܬܪܡܡ , the same word translated as "boast" in the previous section.

[9] Genesis 4:14

[10] Genesis 19:1-25

[11] Genesis 27:36

[12] Genesis 42:6

[13] Exodus 14:19-30

[14] Numbers 16:33

[15] 1Samuel 17:49. The Syriac word for "defeated" (ܐܬܬܒܪ) can also be translated more literally as "crushed". This could refer to David's stone 'sinking into the forehead' of Goliath.

[16] 1Samuel 31:1-4

[17] 2Samuel 18:14

[18] 1Kings 20

the prayer of Hezekiah and the prayer of the prophet Isaiah (the most glorious of the prophets).[19] Ahab exalted himself over Micaiah, and went up to Ramoth Gilead and fell [there].[20] Jezebel glorified herself over Elijah, and the dogs consumed her in the territory[21] of Jezreel.[22] Haman glorified himself over Mordecai, but his wickedness was his own downfall.[23] The Babylonians glorified themselves over Daniel and threw him into the den of lions, but Daniel came up vindicated, and they were thrown into the den in his place.[24] The Babylonians also brought slanderous accusations against Hananiah and his friends, and they were thrown into the fiery furnace. But they came up vindicated, and the flames consumed the slanderers.[25]

4. Nebuchadnezzar said, *"I will ascend to heaven, and I will raise up my throne above the stars of God and sit on the high mountains at the borders of the north."* [26] Isaiah said to him, *"Because your heart has raised you up in this way, you will be brought down to Sheol, and all who see you will be amazed at you."* [27] And Sennacherib said, *"I will go up to the summits of the mountains and also to the lower parts of Lebanon. I will dig and drink water and dry up all the deep rivers with the hooves of my horses."* [28] And because he exalted himself in this way, Isaiah said about him, *"Why does the axe glorify itself over the one who chops with it, or the saw exalt itself over the one who cuts with it, or the rod lift itself up against the one who raises it?"* [29] You, Sennacherib, are the axe in the hand of the one who

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[19] 2Kings 19:35-37; Isaiah 37:36

[20] 1Kings 22:13-38

[21] Syr. ܝܪܬܘܬܐ . The word can also mean "inheritance", "possession", "property", etc.

[22] 1Kings 21:23

[23] Esther 8:9-10. Syr. ܘܗܦܟ ܥܘܠܗ ܒܪܫܗ ; literally: "his wickedness returned to his own head"

[24] Daniel 6:17-25

[25] Daniel 3:1-30

[26] Isaiah 14:13

[27] Isaiah 14:15-16

[28] 2Kings 19:23-24; Isaiah 37:24-25

[29] Isaiah 10:15

chops, and the saw in the hand of the one who cuts, and the rod in the hand of the one who raises [it] up for discipline, and you are the staff of affliction. You were sent against an apostate people, and you were commanded concerning an angry people, so that you might take captives and plunder. To all people and to all nations, you made them like mud in the streets. But when you had done all these things, why did you exalt yourself above the one who holds you? [Why] did you glorify yourself above the one who cuts with you? And [why] did you revile the holy city, and say to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, *"Will your God be able to deliver you from my hands?"* And you dared to say, *"Who is the Lord, that he will deliver you from my hands?"* [30] Because of this, hear the word of the Lord, who said, *"I will break the Assyrian in my land, and I will trample him on my mountains."* [31] And when he has been broken and trampled, the virgin, the daughter of Zion, will despise him, and the daughter of Jerusalem will shake her head and say, *"Whom have you reviled and blasphemed, and against whom do you raise your voice? You have lifted your eyes on high, against the Holy One of Israel, and through your messengers you have reviled the Lord. Take notice and see that the ring has been put into your nostrils, and the bridle on your lips, and you have turned back with your heart broken, you who came with an uplifted heart."* [32] His death was at the hands of his friends, and in the place where he was confident he was overthrown and he fell before his god.[33] It was appropriate, my friend, that this sacrifice and offering was before that god in whom he trusted, and in his temple, as a memorial to his idol.

5. The ram exalted and elevated himself and pushed to the west and to the north and to the south, and humbled many living creatures. None could stand before him, until the young goat came from the west and struck the ram and broke his horns and humbled him completely.[34] The ram was Darius, the king of Media and

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[30] 2Kings 18:35; Isaiah 36:20
[31] Isaiah 14:25
[32] 2Kings 19:21-23, 28; Isaiah 37:22-23, 29
[33] 2Kings 19:36-37; Isaiah 37:38
[34] Daniel 8:2-7

Persia, and the young goat was Alexander, the son of Philip the Macedonian. (Daniel saw the ram when he was in the east in front of the gate of Susa, the fortress which is in the province of Elam, beside the Ulai river.)[35] [The ram] was pushing to the west and to the north and to the south, and none of the living creatures could stand before him. But the young goat among the goats came out of the region of the Greeks and exalted himself over the ram and struck him and broke his two horns, the larger one and the smaller one. Why does it say that he crushed his two horns? It is because he humbled the two kingdoms that [Darius] was ruling, the lesser one of the Medes and the greater one of the Persians. When Alexander the Greek came, he killed Darius the king of Media and Persia, for this is what the angel said when he explained the vision to Daniel: *"The ram that you saw is the king of Media and Persia, and the young goat is the king of the Greeks."* [36] The time from when the two horns of the ram were crushed to the present is six-hundred and forty-eight years.

6. Thus, the horns of the ram were broken. However, though his horns have been broken, he raises himself up and exalts himself against the fourth beast, who is strong and powerful, with teeth of iron and hooves of bronze. [This beast] devours and breaks [things] into pieces, and whatever is left over he tramples with his feet.[37] O ram, whose horns have been broken, draw back from the beast and do not irritate it, or it may devour you and grind you into pieces! The ram was not able to stand before the young goat; how will it stand before the terrible beast, whose mouth utters mighty words and who crouches over whatever it finds like a lion over its prey? Whoever irritates the lion becomes its food. Likewise, the beast devours whoever arouses it, and the one who goes [near it] falls under the feet of the beast, [which] trample him. For the beast will not be killed until the Ancient of Days sits on the throne and

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[35] Daniel 8:2
[36] Daniel 8:20-21
[37] Daniel 7:19

the Son of Men[38] comes before him and is given authority. Then that beast will be killed and its body will decay, but the kingdom of the Son of Men will be an eternal kingdom, and his authority [will be] for ever and ever.

7. You who exalt yourself: be silent! Do not glorify yourself! For if your wealth has lifted up your heart, it cannot be greater than Hezekiah's, all of whose wealth was taken and went to Babylon because he boasted about it before the Babylonians. And if you boast about your sons, they will be led away from you to the beast, like the sons of king Hezekiah were led away and became eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.[39] And if you boast about your wisdom, you do not surpass the ruler of Tyre, whom Ezekiel reproached. He said to him, *"Are you wiser than Daniel? Have you, in your wisdom, seen things that are hidden?"* [40] And if your mind is elevated because of your many years, they are not as many as those of the ruler of Tyre, who governed the kingdom [during] the days of twenty-two kings of the house of Judah, which was four hundred and forty years.[41] And while the years of king of Tyre were increasing, for that whole time he spoke in his heart as follows: *"I am God, and I have sat down on the throne of God in the heart of the seas."* But Ezekiel said to him, *"You are a man, and you are not God."* [42] While the ruler of Tyre walked without fault among the stones of fire, mercy was with him, but when his heart was exalted, the protecting cherub destroyed him.[43]

8. What are the stones of fire, if not the children of Zion and the children of Jerusalem? Previously, in the days of David and Solo-

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[38] Syr. ܒܪ ܐܢܫܐ .

[39] 2Kings 20:12-19; Isaiah 39:1-8

[40] Ezekiel 28:3

[41] Cf. 2Samuel 5:15; 2Kings 5; Ezekiel 28. Hiram is supposed to have lived between the time of Samuel and Ezekiel.

[42] Ezekiel 28:2

[43] Ezekiel 28:14-16

mon his son, Hiram was a friend to those of the house of Israel.[44] But when they were taken into captivity from their country, he celebrated and stomped [on the ground] with his feet, and did not remember [his] friendship with the house of David. And when I said that the children of Judah are called stones of fire, it was not from my own mind that I spoke, for Jeremiah the prophet spoke about them. When he was weeping over them in his lamentations, he said, *"The children of Zion are more valuable than precious stones."* [45] He also said, *"How is it that the stones of the sanctuary are thrown out onto every street corner?"* [46] And again, it says in the prophet, *"The stones that have been thrown out on his land were holy."* [47] These are the stones in which a fire was burning, as Jeremiah said: *"The word of the Lord is in my heart like a fire which is kindled and burns in my bones."* [48] And [the Lord] said to Jeremiah, *"I am giving my word like fire in your mouth, and this people will become like pieces of wood."* [49] Again it says, *"My words go out like fire, and like iron which cuts stone."* [50] For this reason, the prophets among whom Hiram the ruler of Tyre walked were called 'stones of fire.'[51]

9. [God] also said to him, *"You were with the annointed and protecting cherub."* [52] For the king, who was annointed with holy oil, was called a cherub, and he protected his whole people, as Jeremiah said: *"The annointed of the Lord is the breath in our nostrils, he of whom we have said, 'Under his protection we will be at peace among the nations.'"* [53] For they were living under the protection of the king while he was standing as their head, but when the crown fell from their head they became

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[44] 1Kings 5; 2Chronicles 2:1-16
[45] Lamentations 4:2
[46] Lamentations 4:1
[47] Zechariah 9:16 (Peshitta)
[48] Jeremiah 20:9
[49] Jeremiah 5:14
[50] Jeremiah 23:29
[51] A: "great stones of fire"
[52] Ezekiel 28:14
[53] Lamentation 4:20

unprotected. If anyone says that this word was spoken concerning Christ, let him receive what I am writing without dispute and thus be persuaded that it was spoken concerning the king. For Jeremiah said, on behalf of the people, *"Woe to us, for the crown of our head has fallen!"* [54] But Christ has not fallen, because he rose on the third day. The king fell from the house of Judah, and their kingdom was not established again. Again [God] said, *"I will destroy the protecting cherub,"*[55] for the cherub that he would destroy was Nebuchadnezzar, as it is written: *"He worked hard* [56] *in Tyre, but payment for his army was not given to him by Tyre. I have given him the country of Egypt for the work in Tyre."* [57] And why was Nebuchadnezzar not given payment by Tyre? It was because its wealth departed on the sea, and Nebuchadnezzar did not take it. At that time, the protecting cherub, who is Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed [the ruler of Tyre]. For there are two cherubs: one who is annointed and protecting and another who is protecting but not annointed. For above he said, *"You were with the annointed and protecting cherub,"* and lower down he said, *"I will destroy you, protecting cherub,"* but he did not say 'annointed.' Nebuchadnezzar was not annointed, but David and Solomon and the other kings who were after them were. And why was Nebuchadnezzar called "protecting"? It was because of the vision of the tree, when he saw a tree at the centre of the world under which lived all the wild beasts. Every bird of the sky was perched in its branches, and from it all flesh was being nourished. When Daniel interpreted his dream to him, he said, *"You are that tree, the tree that you saw at the centre of the world, and all peoples live under you."* [58] It is for this reason that he was the "protecting cherub" who destroyed the ruler of Tyre. [This was] because [the ruler of Tyre] had rejoiced over [the misfortune of] the children of Israel, who were taken into captivity from their country, and because his heart was exalted. Tyre was desolate for seventy years, like Jerusalem which sat in desolation for seventy

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[54] Lamentations 5:16

[55] Ezekiel 28:16

[56] Syr. ܥܒܕ ܚܝܠܐ . The context is a military campaign against Tyre.

[57] Ezekiel 29:18-19

[58] Daniel 4:7-8

years. For Isaiah said of it, *"Tyre will wander for seventy years, the lifetime of one king, and will prostitute herself with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth."* [59]

10. You who have exalted and lifted yourself up: do not allow the boasting of your heart to lead you astray, so that you will say, 'I will rise up against the rich land and the mighty beast!' For the beast will not be killed by the ram while the ram's horns are broken. The young goat broke the horns of the ram, [and] now the young goat has become the mighty beast. When the descendants of Japhet were sovereign, they killed Darius the king of Persia. Now the fourth beast has swallowed up the third. This third [beast] represents the descendants of Japhet, and the fourth [represents] the descendants of Shem who are [also] the descendants of Esau. For when Daniel saw the vision of the four beasts, he first saw the descendants of Ham, the seed of Nimrod, who are the Babylonians. Second, [he saw] the Persians and the Medes, who are the descendants of Japhet. Third, [he saw] the Greeks, the brothers of the Medes. And fourth, [he saw] the descendants of Shem who are the descendants of Esau. There was an alliance of the descendants of Japhet with the descendants of Shem, but the government was taken from the descendants of Japhet, the younger [brother], and given to [the descendants of] Shem, the older [brother]. This continues to the present day, and [will continue] forever. But when the time of the completion of the leadership of the descendants of Shem comes, the ruler who came out from the descendants of Judah will receive sovereignty at his second coming.

11. In the vision that Nebuchadnezzar saw ([whose meaning] Daniel made known and demonstrated to Nebuchadnezzar), when he saw the image standing in front of him, the head of the image [was made] of gold, its chest and arms [were made] of silver, its belly and thighs [were made] of bronze, and its calves and feet [were made] of iron and clay. And Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar,

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[59] Isaiah 23:15-17

"You are the head of gold." [60] Why was he called the "head of gold"? [It was] because the word of Jeremiah was fulfilled in him. For Jeremiah said, *"Babylon is a golden cup in the hand of the Lord, who gives its wine to the whole world to drink."* [61] Babylon was also called the head of all the kingdoms, as it is written: *"Babylon was the head of the kingdom of Nimrod."* [62]

12. He said that the chest and the arms of the image were [made of] silver. This represented a kingdom inferior to [Babylon], which was that of Darius the Mede, who received the kingdom 'in the balance'. For the kingdom of the house of Nimrod was weighed and was found to be deficient, and while it was deficient, Darius received it.[63] It was for this reason that [Daniel] said that his kingdom was inferior, and because it was deficient, the Medes did not rule over the whole world. The belly and thighs of the image [were made] of bronze, and he said, *"The third kingdom will rule over the whole world."* [64] [This] is the kingdom of the descendants of Javan, who are [also] the descendants of Japhet. The descendants of Javan attacked the kingdom of their brothers (Madai[65] and Javan were sons of Japhet). But Madai was foolish and incapable of governing the kingdom, [right up] until Javan his brother (who was wise and cunning) came to destroy the kingdom. For Alexander, the son of Phillip, ruled over the whole world.

13. The calves and the feet of the image [were made] of iron. [This] represents the kingdom of the descendants of Shem who are [also] the descendants of Esau, [and] who are as strong as iron. And [Daniel] said, *"Just as iron shatters and grinds everything, so too will the fourth kingdom shatter and break up everything."* [66] He explained the

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[60] Daniel 2:38
[61] Jeremiah 51:7
[62] Genesis 10:10
[63] Daniel 5:27
[64] Daniel 2:39
[65] The forefather of the Medes.
[66] Daniel 2:40

significance of the feet and toes, which were made partly of iron and partly of clay. He said, *"In this way they will be mixed with human seed, but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay."* [67] This refers to the fourth kingdom, since in the kingdom of the descendants of Esau no king (the son of a king) was in place to govern the kingdom. Rather, when the descendants of Esau gathered together [to form] a powerful city, they made a senate building, and there they appointed a ruler of the city, a wise man who governed the kingdom. [This was done so that] when the governor of their kingdom weighed them, they would not be found to be deficient, and so that the kingdom would not be taken away from them, as the kingdom of the descendants of the boastful Nimrod was taken away from them and given to the descendants of the foolish Madai. This king that was in place destroyed the offspring of the king who was before him, and they did not come into contact with each other. As for the human seed which is compared to clay, this is the meaning: when the king was chosen for the kingdom, he mingled himself with the root of the kingdom of iron.

14. [Daniel] also demonstrated that in the days of those kings, who are established in [their] rule, *"the God of heaven would establish an eternal kingdom which will never be destroyed and will never pass away."* [68] This is the kingdom of Christ the King, which causes the fourth kingdom to pass away. Previously he said, *"You saw a stone that was cut, but not by [human] hands. It struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and ground them into [many] pieces."* He did not say that [the stone] struck the image on its head, or on its chest or arms, or even on its belly or thighs, but on its feet. [This is] because, when that stone came, of the image as a whole it would find only the feet. And in the next passage, he said, *"The iron and the bronze and the silver and the gold were ground in pieces together."* [69] For after them, when Christ the King rules, he will then humble the fourth kingdom and shatter the whole image. The image represents the whole world: its head is

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[67] Daniel 2:43
[68] Daniel 2:44
[69] Daniel 2:45

Nebuchadnezzar; its chest and arms represent the king of Media and Persia; its belly and thighs represent the king of the Greeks; its calves and feet represent the kingdom of the descendants of Esau. The stone that struck the image and shattered it, and with which the whole world was filled, is the kingdom of Christ the King, who will bring to an end the kingdom of this world and rule for ever and ever.

15. Listen once more [as I explain] the vision of the four beasts that Daniel saw, when they emerged from the sea, each different from the other. This is what they looked like: *"The first was like a lion, but it had the wings of an eagle. I saw that its wings had been plucked, and that it stood like a man on its feet. A human heart had been given to it. The second beast resembled a bear raising itself up on one side, and there were three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. The third beast was like a leopard, but it had four wings and four heads. The fourth beast excelled in strength and might and power, and it had huge teeth, eating and devouring. And whatever was left over it trampled with its feet."* [70] The great sea that Daniel saw represents the world, and these four beasts represent the four kings that were mentioned above.

16. [Daniel] said that the first beast resembled a lion, [but] also had the wings of an eagle. The first beast is the kingdom of Babylon, which resembles a lion. For Jeremiah wrote and spoke as follows: *"Israel is a wandering sheep; the lions made him wander. First, the king of Assyria devoured him, but this last one, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, was stronger than him."* [71] Thus Jeremiah called him a lion. And [Daniel] said, *"It has the wings of an eagle."* For it is written that *"when Nebuchadnezzar went out into the wilderness with the wild beasts, he let his hair grow like an eagle."* [72] And [Daniel] said, *"I saw that its wings had been plucked and that it stood like a man on its feet. A human heart had been given to it."* For in the vision of the image, he was first compared to gold, which is more valuable than anything that is used in the

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[70] Daniel 7:4-7
[71] Jeremiah 50:17
[72] Daniel 4:30

world. In the vision of the beasts, [Nebuchadnezzar] was compared to a lion, whose strength surpasses all [other] beasts, and he was compared to an eagle, whose glory exceeds all [other] flying creatures. Whatever was written about him was fulfilled in him. For the Lord said concerning him: *"I have placed a yoke of iron on the necks of all the nations, and they will serve the king of Babylon for seventy years. I have also placed the beasts of the field and the flying creatures of the sky in his service."* [73] For while the king was like the head of gold, people served him like a king. But when he went out into the wilderness, the beasts served him like a lion, and when his hair was like that of an eagle, the flying creatures of the sky served him like an eagle. When his heart was lifted up, and he did not acknowledge that authority had been given to him from heaven, the yoke of iron was removed from people's necks. He went out with the beasts, and the heart of a lion was given to him instead of the heart of a king. But when he lifted himself above the beasts, the heart of a lion was lifted from him, and he was given the heart of a flying creature. And when he grew wings like an eagle, he exalted himself over the flying creatures,[74] but then his wings were plucked and he was given a humble heart. And when he acknowledged that it is the Most High who gives authority to whomever he wishes in the human realm, he then praised [him] as a human being.

17. Concerning the second beast, [Daniel] said, *"It resembled a bear, and it stood up on one side."* This is because when the kingdom of Media and Persia was established, it stood in the east. *"And three ribs were in its mouth."* This is because the ram was pushing toward the west and the north and the south, toward the three winds of heaven. It held these three winds, and was pushing like the three ribs in the mouth of the bear, until the young goat came out of the west and struck the ram and seized the ribs which were in its mouth.

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[73] Jeremiah 28:14

[74] A adds "his heart [being] like a flying creature"

18. Concerning the third beast, [Daniel] said, *"It resembled a leopard, but it had four flying wings on its back, and that beast had four heads."* [This] third beast was Alexander the Macedonian, for he was as strong as a leopard. The beast had four wings and four heads because [Alexander] gave the kingdom to four of his friends, so that they might rule after him, after he had come and killed Darius and ruled in his place.

19. [Daniel] said that the fourth beast *"excelled in strength and might and power, eating and devouring. And whatever was left over it trampled with its feet."* It represents the kingdom of the descendants of Esau. For after Alexander the Macedonian became king, the kingdom of the Greeks was his, since Alexander was also one of the Greeks. The vision of the third beast was fulfilled in him, since the third and the fourth [beasts] were one. Alexander ruled for twelve years, and after Alexander were the kings of the Greeks. There were seventeen kings, and [they ruled] for a [total of] two hundred and sixty-nine years, from Seleucius Nicanor to Ptolemy. [Then] there were caesars from Augustus to Philip Caesar: twenty-seven kings, [who ruled for a total of] two hundred and ninety-three years, plus the eighteen years of Severus.

20. Daniel said, *"I was considering the ten horns on the head of the beast, for the ten horns are ten kings"* [75] (who arose in the time up to Antiochus). He said, *"A little horn rose up among those ten, and three [of them] fell before it."* [76] For when Antiochus established himself in the kingdom, he humbled three kings, and he raised himself up against the holy ones of the Most High and against Jerusalem. He defiled the sanctuary, and he made the sacrifice and offerings cease for a week and a half (which represents ten and a half years). He brought prostitutes into the house of the Lord, and he made the observances which are in the Law cease. He killed righteous people and he handed them over to the flying creatures of the sky and to the beasts of the earth. In his days the word that David spoke was ful-

[75] Daniel 7:8
[76] Daniel 7:8

filled: *"O God! The Gentiles have entered into your inheritance and have defiled your holy templ. They have made Jerusalem desolate. They have given the corpses of your servants as food to the flying creatures of the sky and the flesh of your righteous ones to the beasts of the earth. They have poured out their blood like water around Jerusalem, and there is no one to bury [them]."* [77] This was fulfilled in that time when Eliazar, an old man advanced in years, was killed along with the seven sons of the blessed Shamuni,[78] and when Judas and his brothers were fighting on behalf of their people and living in hiding places.[79] At that time *"the horn made war against the holy ones,"* [80] but their power prevailed. Antiochus, a wicked man, spoke words against the Most High and changed the times and seasons.[81] He made the covenant of Abraham cease, abolished the Sabbath of rest, and commanded the Jews not to circumcize.[82] For this reason [Daniel] said concerning him, *"He will think to change the times and the seasons and the laws, and they will be given into his hands for a time, times, and half a time."* [83] The time and half a time are a week and a half, which represents ten and a half years. Again he said, *"Judgement has sat down, and they have taken his authority away from him, in order to destroy and annihilate him until the end of the kingdom."* [84] For judgement came upon Antiochus, a judgement from heaven. He became sick with a persistent and evil sickness, and no one would come near him because of the smell that came from him. Worms were crawling over and falling from him and eating his flesh because he oppressed the worm Jacob,[85] and his

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[77] Psalm 79:1-3

[78] 2Maccabees 6:18-7:42. The name "Shamuni", not mentioned in any biblical text, is also found in later Syriac sources. For a discussion of the possible origins of the name, see Pierre's discussion (vol. 1, note 31 on p. 346). In rabbinic sources, the name of the mother of the seven martyrs is Miriam (see Pierre's note for a list of sources).

[79] 2Maccabees 5:27

[80] Daniel 7:21

[81] Daniel 7:25

[82] 1Maccabees 1:48

[83] Daniel 7:25

[84] Daniel 7:26

[85] Cf. Isaiah 41:14

flesh rotted in his lifetime because he caused the corpses of the inhabitants of Jerusalem to rot when they were not buried.[86] He became defiled in his own eyes because he defiled the sanctuary of God. He prayed but was not heard, because he did not hear the groans of the righteous ones that he killed. He wrote a letter and sent it to the Jews and called them 'my friends', but God had no compassion on him and he died in his torment.[87]

21. [Daniel] also said, *"The holy ones of the Most High will receive the kingdom."* [88] What should we say about this? Have the descendants of Israel received the kingdom of the Most High? May it not be so! Or has that people come upon the clouds of heaven? This has passed them by. For Jeremiah said concerning them: *"Call them 'rejected silver', since the Lord has rejected them."* [89] Again he said: *"He will not regard them again."* [90] And Isaiah said concerning them: *"Pass by! Pass by! Do not approach those who are defiled!"* [91] And concerning the holy ones of the Most High, [Daniel] spoke as follows: *"They will inherit the kingdom for ever and ever."* [92] These [descendants of Israel] rested a little from the burden of kings and princes,[93] from after the death of Antiochus until the sixty-two weeks were completed.[94] Then the Son of Men came to liberate them and gather them together, but they did not accept him.[95] He came to take fruit from them, but they did not give to him,[96] for the vines were from the vine of Sodom and from the stock of Gomorrah.[97] They were a

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[86] 2Maccabees 5:9-10
[87] 2Maccabees 9:18-28
[88] Daniel 7:27
[89] Jeremiah 6:30
[90] Lamentations 4:16
[91] Isaiah 52:11
[92] Daniel 7:27
[93] Hosea 8:10
[94] Daniel 9:25-26
[95] John 1:11
[96] Matthew 21:34; Mark 12:2; Luke 20:10
[97] Deuteronomy 32:32

vineyard in which thistles grew, and which produced wild grapes.[98] Their wine was vinegar and their fruits were bitter.[99] The thistles could not be softened, nor could the vinegar change into the substance of wine, nor could the bitter [fruits] be changed into a sweet substance.

22. Previously, Isaiah had established men from Judah as judges for them, so that a new and cherished plantation might be planted among them. It is these judges who will sit on twelve thrones[100] and judge their twelve tribes. [God] said to the judges: *"Judge between me and my vineyard! What more should I have done for my vineyard that I did not do, O judges? I planted shoots, but they became strange vines.*[101] *I surrounded its fence with heavenly watchers, and I built its tower, the holy temple. I dug out its winepress, [which is] the baptism of the priests. I made rain fall on it, [which is] the words of my prophets. I pruned it and trimmed away from it the works of the Amorites. I waited for it to produce grapes of righteousness, but it produced wild grapes of iniquity and sin. I looked for judgement, but there was [only] violence,*[102] *and for righteousness, but there was [only] lamentation. "Hear, O judges, what I will do to my vineyard! I will break down its fence and it will be trampled underfoot. I will pull down its tower and it will be plundered. I will make it into a desert because it produced wild grapes. It will not be trimmed or pruned, and thistles and thickets will grow in it. I will command the clouds so that they will not make rain fall upon it."* [103] For the heavenly watchers have abandoned the fence of the vineyard, and the tower, the source of their strong confidence, has been torn down. The winepress, the washing away of their offences, has been thrown down. When the vine had no blemish, it was good for nothing. Now that the fire has devoured and ravaged it, how will it

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[98] Isaiah 5:2, 6. The Syriac term translated as "wild grapes" is ܚܪ̈ܘܒܐ , which literally means 'dry ones' or 'withered ones'. The term refers to the uncultivated nature of wild grapes.

[99] Deuteronomy 32:32

[100] Daniel 7:22; Matthew 19:28

[101] Isaiah 5:3-4; Matthew 21:23; Mark 12:1

[102] Isaiah 5:7

[103] Isaiah 5:5-6

be good for anything? The fire has devoured its two branches and its insides have wasted away.[104] Its two branches are the two kingdoms, and its insides which have wasted away represent Jerusalem. Many servants were sent to them from the owner of the vineyard, but they killed them and did not send [any] fruit to the owner of the vineyard.[105] After the servants the beloved son was sent, to receive fruits from them and bring them back to the one who sent him. But they siezed him and threw him out of the vineyard, and they cut spikes from the thorns in the vineyard and drove them into his hands. He was hungry and he asked them for food, so they took gall from the fruits of the vineyard and gave it to him. He was thirsty and asked them for a drink; they gave him vinegar but he did not wish to drink it. They wove together thorns that had grown in the vineyard and set them on the head of the son of the master of the vineyard. From the time that it came into being, the vineyard displayed these fruits. Its master uprooted it and threw it into the fire, and he planted good vines which bear fruit and bring joy to the gardener. For Christ is the vineyard, his father is the gardener, and those who drink from his cup are the vines. [One] vineyard has come into being instead of [another] vineyard. And at his coming, he handed over the kingdom to the Romans, who are called the descendants of Esau. These descendants of Esau will keep the kingdom for its giver.

23. The holy people, who were chosen instead of the people, have inherited an eternal kingdom. *"For [God] made them jealous with a people that was not a people, and with a foolish people he angered them."* [106] And he liberated the holy people: take note that every covenant of God is liberated from the burden of kings and princes.[107] For even if a person has served the ungodly, the moment he approaches the covenant of God he is set free. The Jews, however, are serving in slavery among the peoples. For [Daniel] spoke as follows concern-

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[104] Ezekiel 15:4-5
[105] Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19
[106] Deuteronomy 32:21; Romans 10:19
[107] Hosea 8:10

ing the holy ones: *"They will inherit the kingdom which is under heaven."* [108] If he spoke concerning [the Jews], then why do they serve in slavery among the peoples? And if [the Jews] say that this has not yet taken place, [we then ask] whether the kingdom that is given to the Son of Men[109] is heavenly or earthly. Take note that the children of the kingdom have been marked, and they have received their liberation from this world. As it exists now, [this world] is not willing to be subjugated to the power of the King who will come and receive his kingdom, but he will guard his pledges with honour. For when he comes, he will bring an end to the kingdom, so that he might not come to them with anger. When he to whom the kingdom[110] belongs comes for the second time, he will take back whatever he has given. He will be King for ever and ever, and his kingdom will not pass away, since it is an eternal kingdom.

24. At first, [God] gave the kingdom to the descendants of Jacob and made the descendants of Esau their servants, as Isaac said to Esau: *"You will serve your brother Jacob."* [111] But when they were not successful in the kingdom, he took it from the descendants of Jacob and gave it to the descendants of Esau, until the one to whom it belongs came.[112] They will hand over the deposit to the one who gave it, and will not withhold [any] of it. The keeper of the kingdom will be subjected to the one to whom everything is subjected. For this reason, the kingdom of the descendants of Esau will not be delivered into the hands of the gathered armies who wish to go up against it, since the kingdom is being kept for its giver, and he will keep it. With respect to what I [just] wrote to you, my friend (that the kingdom of the descendants of Esau will be kept for its giver), have no doubt that that kingdom will not be conquered. For a mighty champion, whose name is Jesus, will

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[108] Daniel 7:27
[109] Syr. ܠܒܪ ܐܢܫܝܢ
[110] A: "eternal kingdom"
[111] Genesis 27:40
[112] Genesis 49:10

come with power, carrying all the power of the kingdom as his armour. Investigate [the matter] and see that he was also recorded with them in the census,[113] and just as he was recorded with them in the census, he will also come to their aid. His banner is everywhere in that place; they are clothed with his armour and will not be defeated in war. And if you should say to me, 'Why, in the years of the rulers who were before these, did they conquer and subdue the beast?' It was because the leaders and rulers who were in place at that time in the kingdom of the descendants of Esau did not want to take with them to war the man who was recorded with them in the census. For this reason, the beast was subdued for a little while but not killed.

25. [With respect to] these things that I have written to you, my friend, which are recorded in Daniel, I have not reached the end of them, but [have stopped] short of the end. If someone disputes these things, speak as follows to him: 'These words have not been sealed, since the words of God are infinite and cannot be sealed.' A foolish person says, '[These] words reach this far…' However, they cannot be added to or diminished, for the wealth of God cannot be calculated or limited. If you take water from the sea, the deficiency will be imperceptible, and if you remove sand from the shore, its quantity will not be lessened. If you count the stars of heaven, you will not come to an end of them, and if you kindle a flame from a fire, it will not be diminished at all. If you receive the Spirit of Christ, Christ is not diminished at all, and if Christ lives in you, not all of him is in you. If the sun enters the windows of your house, not all of the sun is reaching you. All these things that I have listed for you have been created by the word of God. Know then, that no one has arrived at or will arrive at the end of the word of God. For this reason, do not dispute with yourself about these things or say, 'These things are so, and only [these things].' Rather, hear these things from me, and also discuss them with our brothers, the sons of our faith.[114] Do not listen, however, to the words of the one

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[113] Luke 2:1

[114] Syr. ܒܢܝ̈ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ. The phrase is used elsewhere only at the end

who mocks the words of his brother, even if he says 'My [words] are wiser.' With respect to what I have written to you about these armies that are being stirred up for war, it is not as something that has been revealed to me that I make known to you these things. Rather, listen to the words at the beginning of [this] letter: *"Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled."* [115] For even if the armies go up and conquer, keep in mind that this is God's correction, and even if they conquer, [these armies] will be condemned in a righteous judgement. And know this: the beast will be killed at its [appointed] time. But you, my brother, endeavour to seek mercy at this time, so that there might be peace for the people of God.

The demonstration on wars is completed.

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of demonstration 10. Manuscript A has "the sons of my faith".

[115] Luke 14:11

DEMONSTRATION 6: *ON COVENANTERS*

I. CONTENTS

1 biblical images of the Christian life
2 the various strategies of Satan
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8 the proper conduct of a covenanter
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11-12a how Christ remains one while living in many
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18 natural vs. spiritual resurrection: guarding the Spirit
19 the incomparableness of virginity: an eschatological exhortation
20 conclusion: avoid mockery and meditate on the Law

II. TRANSLATION

1. The words that I speak are fitting and worthy of acceptance: let us wake up from our sleep at this time[1] and lift our hearts, together with our hands, to God in heaven, in case the Lord of the

[1] Romans 13:11

house comes suddenly, so that when he comes he will find us keeping watch.[2] Let us keep the appointed time of the glorious Bridegroom, so that we may enter with him into his bridal chamber.[3] Let us prepare oil for our lamps, so that we might go out to meet him with joy.[4] Let us gather supplies for our dwelling-place, for the way that is straight and narrow.[5] Let us take off and throw away from ourselves all impurity, so that we might put on wedding garments.[6] Let us do business with the silver that we have received, so that we might be called diligent servants.[7] Let us perservere in prayer, in order to pass by the place of fear.[8] Let us cleanse our hearts from iniquity, so that we might see the Exalted One in his glory.[9] Let us be merciful, as it is written, so that God might have mercy on us.[10] Let there be peace among us, so that we might be called brothers of Christ.[11] Let us be hungry for righteousness, so that we might be satisfied from the table of his kingdom.[12] Let us be the salt of truth, lest we become food for the serpent.[13] Let us clear away thistles from our seed, in order to produce fruit a hundred-fold.[14] Let us set our building on the rock, so that it will not be shaken by the winds and the waves.[15] Let us be vessels of honour,[16] so that we will be required by our Lord for his use. Let us sell all our posses-

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[2] Matthew 24:42; Mark 13:35

[3] Matthew 25:10

[4] Matthew 25:4-7

[5] Matthew 7:14

[6] Matthew 22:12

[7] Matthew 25:21

[8] Syr. ܐܬܪܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܩܢܛܐ. The only other occurrence of the word ܩܢܛܐ in the *Demonstrations* is in 22.9, where it is used in the phrase ܠܐܬܪܐ ܕܠܐ ܩܢܛܐ ("to a secure place").

[9] Matthew 5:8

[10] Matthew 5:7; Luke 6:36

[11] Matthew 5:9

[12] Matthew 5:6

[13] Matthew 5:13

[14] Matthew 17:7-8; Mark 4:7-8; Luke 8:7-8

[15] Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6:7-8

[16] 2Timothy 2:21

sions, and buy the pearl, so that we might be rich.[17] Let us store our treasure in heaven,[18] so that when we go [there], we can open and enjoy [it]. Let us visit our Lord in those who are sick, so that he will call us and we will stand at his right hand.[19] Let us hate ourselves and love Christ,[20] since he loved us and gave himself up on our behalf.[21] Let us honour the Spirit of Christ, so that we might receive grace from him. Let us be strangers to the world, just as Christ was not of it.[22] Let us be humble and moderate, so that we might inherit the land of life.[23] Let us be faithful in his service, so that he might serve us in the dwelling place of the holy ones. Let us pray his prayer in purity, so that it might go before the Lord of majesty. Let us be partakers of his suffering, so that we might also live through his resurrection.[24] Let us receive his sign upon our bodies, so that we might be delivered from the wrath that is coming. For the day of his coming is terrible: who can endure it? For his wrath is furious and hot, and it destroys all the wicked. Let us place the helmet of salvation on our heads, so that we will not be wounded and die in the battle. Let us gird our loins with truth,[25] so as not to be weak in the contest.[26] Let us arise and awaken Christ, so that he might calm the storms for us.[27] Let us take as a shield against the Evil One the readiness that comes from the Gospel of our Saviour.[28] Let us receive power from our Lord to tread upon serpents and scorpions.[29] Let us remove anger from ourselves, together with all violence and wickedness. Let insults not come out

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[17] Matthew 13:46
[18] Matthew 6:20; 10:21; Luke 12:33
[19] Matthew 25:31-46
[20] John 12:25
[21] Ephesians 5:2
[22] John 17:14
[23] Matthew 5:4
[24] Philippians 3:10; Galatians 6:17; 1Thessalonians 1:10
[25] A: "with justice [ܒܩܘܫܬܐ] and truth"
[26] Ephesians 6:14-17
[27] Matthew 8:25-26, Mark 4:37-38, Luke 8:23-24
[28] Ephesians 6:16
[29] Luke 10:19

of our mouths, with which we pray to God.[30] Let us not curse,[31] so that we might be set free from the curse of the Law.[32] Let us be diligent workers, in order to claim our pay together with those who have gone before [us]. Let us take up the burden of the day, in order to seek a more excellent reward.[33] Let us not be lazy workers, for our Lord has hired us for his vineyard. Let us be planted as vines in the midst of his vineyard, which is the true vineyard.[34] Let us be good vines, so that we will not be uprooted from the vineyard. Let us be a pleasing fragrance, so that our odour might go out to those around us.[35] Let us be poor in the world,[36] but let us enrich many with the teaching of our Lord. Let us not call ourselves 'father' on earth,[37] so that we might be the children of the Father who is in heaven.[38] Though we possess nothing, we take hold of everything.[39] Though no one knows us, we have many acquaintances. Let us rejoice in our hope at all times,[40] so that our Hope and our Saviour might rejoice in us. Let us judge ourselves rightly and condemn [ourselves], so that we might not turn our faces downward [before the members of] the tribunal, who sit on thrones and judge the tribes. Let us take as armour for the fight the readiness that comes from the Gospel.[41] Let us knock at the gate of heaven, so that it might be opened before us and we might enter through it.[42] Let us ask for mercy boldly, so that we might receive what we need. Let us seek his kingdom and its righteousness, so that we

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[30] James 3:9-10

[31] Syr. "Let us not be cursers"

[32] Galatians 3:10. The concept of the curse(s) of the Law is found in Aphrahat only here and in section 6 (twice) of this demonstration.

[33] Matthew 20:1-16

[34] John 15:1-2

[35] 2Corinthians 2:5

[36] cf. James 2:5

[37] Or: "Let no one call us 'father'…"

[38] Matthew 23:9

[39] 2Corinthians 6:10

[40] Romans 12:12

[41] Ephesians 6:15

[42] Matthew 7:7-8; Luke11:9-10

might receive an increase in the land.[43] Let us consider the things above, the heavenly things, and meditate on them, the place where Christ has been exalted and raised up.[44] Let us leave the world, which is not ours, in order to arrive at the place to which we have been invited. Let us lift our eyes upwards, so that we might see the splendour that is revealed. Let us lift up our wings like eagles, so that we might see the body where it is.[45] Let us prepare offerings for the King, the desirable fruits [of] fasting and prayer. Let us guard his pledge in purity, so that he might entrust us with his whole treasury. For the one who deals falsely with his pledge is not allowed to enter into his treasury. Let us guard the body of Christ, so that our bodies might rise at the voice of the trumpet.[46] Let us obey the voice of the Bridegroom, in order to enter with him into the bridal chamber. Let us prepare a wedding gift for his wedding feast, and go out to meet him with joy.[47] Let us put on holy garments[48] so that we might be guests at the head [of the table] of the elect.[49] Whoever is not wearing wedding garments will be thrown outside into the darkness.[50] The one who excuses himself from the wedding celebrations does not taste the meal.[51] The one who loves fields and merchandise will be deprived of the city of the holy ones. Whoever does not produce fruit in the midst of the vineyard is uprooted and thrown to the [place of] torment. Let the one who has received money from his master return it with interest to the one who gave it to him.[52] Whoever wishes to become a merchant, let him buy the field and the treasure that is in it.[53] Let the one who

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[43] Matthew 6:33; Luke 12:31
[44] Colossians 3:1-2
[45] Matthew 24:28; Luke 17:37
[46] 1Thessalonians 4:16
[47] Matthew 25:6
[48] Matthew 22:12
[49] Luke 14:10
[50] Matthew 22:13
[51] Luke 14:24
[52] Matthew 25:27; Luke 12:23
[53] Matthew 13:44

has received the good seed clear his land of thistles.[54] Let the one who wishes to be a fisherman throw out his net on every occasion.[55] Let the one who is training for the contest keep himself from the world.[56] Let the one who wishes to receive a crown run as a champion in the competition. Let the one who wants to enter the stadium to fight learn about his opponent. Let the one who wishes to enter into battle take armour for himself in order to fight, and let him keep it clean at all times.[57] Let the one who takes on the image of angels [58] be a stranger to people. Let the one who takes on the yoke [59] of the holy ones remove himself from getting and giving. Let the one who seeks to gain his soul abandon worldy possessions.[60] The one who loves a heavenly home ought not to labour over a building of clay which falls down. The one who expects to be snatched up into the clouds will not build decorated chariots for himself. The one who waits for the feast of the Bridegroom does not love the feast of the present time. Whoever wishes to enjoy the banquet that is being reserved in heaven will keep drunkenness far from himself. The one who prepares himself for the dinner will not excuse himself or engage in business.[61] The one on whom the good seed falls does not allow the Evil One to plant weeds in him.[62] The one who sets out to build a tower will take into consideration all of his costs.[63] Whoever builds ought to finish, or else he will be

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[54] Jeremiah 4:3; Matthew 13:22; Mark 4:18; Luke 8:14

[55] Matthew 13:47

[56] 1Corinthians 9:24-25

[57] Or: "let him purify himself at all times"

[58] Matthew 22:30; Mark 12:25; John 20:36

[59] This is an allusion to Matthew 11:28-30. Cf. the end of section 1, as well as the end of section 4 and the beginning and end of section 8. See also 14.16, 14.38, and 15.8. A contrast is provided in 18.7, where marriage is described as a "harmful yoke". Behind all of this is the contrast, implicit in the Gospel account and in Aphrahat, with the Jewish concept of the 'yoke of the Law'.

[60] Matthew 10:39; Mark 8:35; John 12:25; Luke 9:25, 17:35

[61] Luke 14:18-20

[62] Matthew 13:24-25

[63] Luke 14:28

laughed at by those who pass by.[64] Let the one who builds on the rock set his foundations deep, so that his building will not fall from the waves.[65] The one who wishes to escape the darkness will journey while he has light.[66] Whoever is afraid that he will not escape in the winter will prepare himself in the summer.[67] Let the one who hopes to enter into rest make preparations for the Sabbath.[68] Let the one who seeks the cancellation of a debt from his master also cancel the debt of the one who owes him [money].[69] The master of the one who does not demand [the repayment of] a hundred denarii will forgive his debt of ten thousand talents.[70] Whoever puts his master's money down on the [banker's] table will not be called a wicked servant. Whoever loves humility becomes an heir in the land of life.[71] The one who desires to make peace becomes one of the children of God.[72] Let the one who knows his master's will do it, so that he will not be beaten severely.[73] Whoever cleanses his heart from deceit, his eyes will see the King in his beauty.[74] Let the one who receives the Spirit of Christ adorn his inner man.[75] Whoever is called the temple of God ought to purge his body[76] of all defilement.[77] Whoever grieves the Spirit of Christ will not be able to lift his head from bitter weeping.[78] Let the one who carries the body of Christ keep his body from all defilement. Let not the one

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[64] Luke 14:29-30
[65] Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6:46-49
[66] John 12:35
[67] Matthew 24:20; Mark 13:18
[68] Hebrews 4:9-11; John 6:27
[69] Matthew 18:23-35; Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4
[70] Matthew 25:27; Luke 21:23
[71] Matthew 5:4
[72] Matthew 5:9
[73] Luke 12:47
[74] Isaiah 33:17
[75] Luke 11:25
[76] A: "his soul [ܢܦܫܗ]" (or, "himself")
[77] 1Corinthians 3:16
[78] Ephesians 4:30; Psalm 110:7

who throws off the old man[79] turn back again to his former activities. Let the one who puts on the new man keep himself from all impurity. Let not the one who has put on armour at the waters [of baptism] take off his armour, or else he will be conquered.[80] Let the one who lifts a shield against the Evil One keep himself from the darts which he throws at him.[81] The Lord is not pleased with the one who hesitates. The one who ponders the Law of his Lord will not be disturbed by the anxieties of this world. Whoever meditates on the Law of his Lord is like a tree planted by the water.[82] The one whose confidence is in his Lord is also like a tree established by the stream.[83] Whoever puts his confidence in a human being receives the curses of Jeremiah.[84] The one who is invited by the Bridegroom should prepare himself.[85] Whoever lights his lamp should not let it go out.[86] The one who waits for the call should take oil in his vessel. Whoever guards the gate ought to keep watch for his master. The one who loves virginity should become like Elijah.[87] The one who takes up the yoke of the holy ones should sit and be silent.[88] Whoever loves the solitary life should look to his Lord as the hope of life.

2. Our Adversary is skillful, my friend, and the One who fights against us is crafty. He prepares himself against the strong and the heroic, so that they might be weakened. For the weak belong to him, and he does not oppose those whom he has captured. Whoever has wings flies from him, and the darts he throws do not reach

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[79] Ephesians 4:22

[80] Syr. ܢܬܚܝܒ , which can also be translated "be condemned."

[81] Ephesians 6:16

[82] Psalm 1:1-3

[83] Jeremiah 17:7-8

[84] Jeremiah 17:5-6

[85] Matthew 22:1-6; Luke 14:16-20

[86] Matthew 25:7-8

[87] 1Kings 17:1-7 is probably the intended reference, since there Elijah is commanded to live alone.

[88] Lamentations 3:27-28

him. Those who are spiritual see him when he draws near, and his weapons have no power over their bodies. None of the children of light fear him, for the darkness flees from before the light. The children of the Good One are not afraid of the Evil One, for he has given him over to be trampled by their feet.[89] When he makes himself like darkness, they become light. When he creeps up to them as a serpent, they become salt, which he is not able to eat.[90] If he becomes like an asp to them, they become like infants.[91] If he comes against them with a desire for food, they, in the image of our Saviour, conquer him with fasting.[92] And if he fights against them with the lust of the eyes, they lift up their eyes to the height of heaven. If he seeks to conquer them through flattery, they do not give him a hearing. And if he wishes to fight openly with them, they are clothed in amour and stand up to him. If he tries to come to them in sleep, they are attentive and keep watch, singing songs and praying. If he entices them with possessions, they give them to the poor. If he comes to them as sweetness, they do not taste him, for they know that he is bitter. And if he inflames them with a desire for Eve, they live alone and not with the daughters of Eve.

3. For it was through Eve that he came against Adam, and in his innocence Adam was enticed by him.[93] He also came against Joseph, through his master's wife, but Joseph was aware of his deceptiveness and did not wish to obey him.[94] Through a woman he fought with Samson, until he cast off his nazirite vow.[95] Reuben was the firstborn among all his brothers, but through his father's wife, [the Adversary] cast a blemish upon him.[96] Aaron was high

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[89] Genesis 3:15; Psalm 91:13; Luke 10:19
[90] Matthew 5:13-14
[91] Isaiah 11:18
[92] Matthew 4:5
[93] Genesis 3:1-7
[94] Genesis 39:7-20
[95] Judges 16:4
[96] Genesis 35:21-22; 49:3-4

priest of Israel, but because of Miriam his sister he envied Moses.[97] Moses was sent to deliver the people from Egypt, but he took with him a wicked counsellor; the Lord came upon Moses and wanted to kill him, until he sent back his wife to Midian.[98] David was victorious in all his battles, but by means of a daughter of Eve a blemish was found in him.[99] Amnon was attractive and handsome to look at, but [the Adversary] imprisoned him with a desire for his sister, and Absalom killed him because of the humiliation of Tamar.[100] Solomon was greater than all the kings of the earth, but in his old age his wives led his heart astray.[101] Through Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, the wickedness of Ahab increased, and he became greatly defiled.[102] [The Adversary] also tempted Job, through his children and his possessions, but when he found that he could not overpower him, he went out to get his [secret] weapon. He came back and brought with him a daughter of Eve, who caused Adam to drown, and through her mouth he said to Job, the righteous man, *"Curse God!"* But Job rejected her counsel.[103] King Asa also conquered the Accursed of Life when he wanted to come against him through his mother. For Asa knew his deceit, and he removed his mother from her high position and cut [her] idol to pieces and threw it down.[104] John was greater than all the prophets, but Herod killed him because of a dance of a daughter of Eve. Haman was rich, and the third in command after the king, but his wife counseled him to destroy the Jews.[105] Zimri was the chief of the tribe of Simeon, but Cozbi, daughter of the chiefs of Midian, overthrew

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[97] Numbers 12:1-2
[98] Exodus 4:24-26
[99] 2Samuel 11
[100] 2Samuel 13
[101] 1Kings 11:1-13; Sirach 47:19-20
[102] 1Kings 21:25
[103] Job 1-2
[104] 1Kings 15:13; 2Chronicles 15:16
[105] Esther 5:9-14

him, and because of one woman twenty-four thousand [men] fell in one day.[106]

4. For this reason, my brothers, [if there is] any man who is a covenanter or a holy one who loves singleness yet wants a female covenanter ([who is] like him) to live with him, it would be better for him to take a wife openly and not become wild with lust.[107] Likewise for the woman: if she does not wish to be separated from a single one, she should be [united] to the man openly. It is good for a woman to live with a woman, and a man ought to live with a man. Furthermore, if a man wishes to remain in holiness, his wife should not live with him, so that he will not return to his former state and be considered an adulterer. This counsel that I give myself is good and proper and beautiful, as it is also for you, my friends, [who are] single ones (who do not take wives) and female virgins (who do not belong to husbands) and those who love holiness: even if a person encounters difficulty, it is proper and right and good that he [or she] should remain alone. In this way, it is appropriate for him [or her] to live as it is written in the prophet Jeremiah: *"Blessed is the man who takes up Your yoke in his youth and dwells alone and is quiet, for he carries his yoke upon himself."*[108] For this reason, my friend, it is good for whoever carries the yoke of Christ to carry his [or her] yoke in purity.[109]

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[106] Numbers 25:1-14

[107] 1Corinthians 7:9

[108] Lamentations 3:27-28. Cf. the end of section 1.

[109] Cf. Matthew 11:29-30. This passage could be taken to imply that one can carry the yoke of Christ *without* attaining purity, i.e. without renouncing marriage. In this interpretation, there is a basic yoke and a more advanced, ascetic yoke. Or, Aphrahat could simply be saying that to carry the yoke of Christ one must avoid any sort of compromise. In this interpretation "yoke of Christ" always means askesis. This second interpretation is supported by the fact that almost all of the occurrences of this word listed in footnote 59 above refer to the ascetic state rather than to an ethical 'Law of Christ' applicable to all believers. An exception to this is found in 18.7, where the "yoke of marriage" is mentioned. See also 15.8, where the yoke of Christ is associated with the ten commandments.

5. For concerning Moses it is written that from the time that the Holy One was revealed to him he loved holiness, and from the time that he was sanctified his wife did not minister to him. Rather, it is written that *"Joshua son of Nun ministered to Moses from his youth."*[110] And concerning Joshua it is also written, *"He did not depart from the tabernacle."*[111] Moreover, the temporary tabernacle was not serviced by [any] woman, for the Law did not allow a woman to enter into it: even when they came to pray, they would pray at the door and turn back. It also commanded the priests, that for the duration of their ministry they were to remain in holiness and not have sexual relations with their wives. Concerning Elijah it is written that when he was living on Mount Carmel and at the brook of Cherith, he was ministered to by his disciple. Because his heart was in heaven, the birds of heaven brought nourishment to him.[112] Since he carried the image of the watchers of heaven, those watchers brought him bread and water when he was fleeing from Jezebel.[113] And because he directed all his thought to heaven, he was taken up in the chariot of fire to heaven, and his dwelling place is there forever.[114] Elisha also walked in the footsteps of his master, and lived in the upper room of the Shulammite woman, and was ministered to by his disciple. For the Shulammite woman said, *"He is a holy prophet of God and he passes by us often. Therefore, because of his holiness we should prepare him an upper chamber and the provisions that go with it."* [115] And what were the provisions supplied with the upper room of Elisha? Only a bed, table, chair and candlestick. But what should we say of John? He did not live among people, and he guarded his virginity with honour [116] and received the spirit of Elijah.[117] Moreover, the blessed apostle said concerning himself

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[110] Numbers 11:28
[111] Exodus 33:11
[112] 1Kings 17:1-6
[113] 1Kings 19:5-7
[114] 2Kings 2:11-12
[115] 2Kings 4:9-10
[116] A: "carefully"; ܒܢܗܝܪܘܬܐ instead of ܒܙܗܝܘܬܐ.
[117] Matthew 11:14; 17:10-11

and Barnabas, *"Did we not have the authority to eat and drink and to bring wives along with us? But it was not good or right."* [118]

6. On this account, brothers, we know and have seen that from the beginning women[119] have been a way for the Adversary to gain access to people, and until the end he will [continue to] accomplish this. For [women] are the weapon of Satan, and through them he fights against the [spiritual] athletes. Through them he plays music at all times, for they have been like a harp for him from the first day. It was because of her that the curse of the Law was established, and it was because of her that the promise of death came. With pain she brings forth children[120] and delivers [them] to death. Because of her the earth was cursed, so that it would bring forth thorns and thistles.[121] But now, by the coming of the child of the blessed Mary, the thistles are uprooted, the sweat is wiped away, the fig tree is cursed,[122] the dust is made salty, the curse is nailed to the Cross,[123] the point of the sword is removed from before the tree of life[124] (which is given as food to the faithful), and paradise is promised to the blessed and the virgins and the holy ones. The fruit of the tree of life is given as food to the faithful, to the virgins[125] and to those who do the will of God. The gate is opened[126] and the way prepared. The spring flows and gives water to the thirsty.[127] The table is laid and the banquet prepared.[128] The fattened ox is slain and the cup of salvation is mixed. Fragrant foods

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[118] 1Corinthians 9:4-5

[119] Syr. has "woman"; I have pluralized here and in what follows for a better English rendering.

[120] Genesis 3:16

[121] Genesis 3:17-18

[122] Genesis 3:19; Mark 11:20

[123] Colossians 2:14

[124] Genesis 3:24

[125] The term is masculine, but masculine plurals are used to refer to groups of mixed gender.

[126] Matthew 7:13-14

[127] John 7:37-38

[128] Psalm 23:5; Matthew 22:4

are prepared and the Bridegroom is about to take his place. The apostles have issued invitations, and those who are called are many.[129] Prepare yourselves, you chosen ones! The light has shone forth and is glorious and beautiful. Garments not made with hands are prepared, and the trumpet blast is approaching. The tombs are opened[130] and [their] contents laid bare. The dead arise and the living fly to meet the King.[131] The feast is ready: the horn encourages [us] and the trumpets[132] hasten [us] on. The watchers of heaven make haste and the throne is set up for the Judge. The one who has worked [hard] rejoices,[133] but the one who has grown weary is afraid.[134] The one who has been wicked[135] does not approach the Judge. Those on the right rejoice, but those on the left weep and wail. Those in the light enjoy pleasures, but those in the darkness groan, for their tongues will not be moistened.[136] Grace has passed by and justice reigns: there is no repentance in that place. Winter has come and the summer has gone.[137] The Sabbath of rest has come and work has ceased. Night has ended and the light reigns. The sting of death is broken and it is swallowed up in life.[138] Those who return to Sheol weep and gnash their teeth, but those who enter the kingdom are glad and rejoice and dance and sing praises. For those who do not take wives are ministered to by the watchers of heaven. Those who have guarded holiness rest in the sanctuary of the Most High. The Only-Begotten who is from the bosom of his Father makes all the single ones rejoice.[139] In that

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[129] Matthew 22:10; Luke 14:16

[130] Matthew 25:6; 27:52

[131] 1Thessalonians 4:17

[132] 1Corinthians 15:52

[133] Matthew 24:31

[134] B omits the second half of this sentence.

[135] B: "who has given up"; ܘܕܐܪܫܠ instead of ܘܕܐܪܫܥ.

[136] Luke 16:24

[137] Cf. Song of Solomon 2:11.

[138] 1Corinthians 15:54-56

[139] The same Syriac word (ܝܚܝܕܝܐ) is used for "Only-Begotten" and "single ones".

place there is neither male nor female, neither slave nor free person, but all are children of the Most High.[140] All the pure virgins, those who are betrothed to Christ, light their lamps in that place and go with the Bridegroom into the bridal chamber.[141] All those who are betrothed to Christ are far removed from the curse[142] of the Law, and are saved from the penalty imposed on the daughters of Eve, for they do not unite with men, and [therefore do not] receive the curses and do not experience the pains [of childbirth]. They do not consider death, since they do not hand children over to it, and in place of a mortal husband they are betrothed to Christ. *"And because they do not bear children a name that is better than 'sons' or 'daughters' is given to them."* [143] Instead of the groans of the daughters of Eve they utter the songs of the Bridegroom. The wedding banquet of the daughters of Eve is for seven days, but they have a Bridegroom who never goes away. The adornment of the daughters of Eve is wool which wears out and is destroyed, but they have garments which do not wear out. Old age withers the beauty of the daughters of Eve, but the beauty that they have is renewed at the time of the resurrection.

7. You virgins who have betrothed yourselves to Christ: if a covenanter[144] says to one of you, 'I will live with you and you will serve me,' you should say to him, 'I am betrothed to a man of royalty, and I am serving him. If I leave his service and serve you, my betrothed will be angry with me and will write me a letter of divorce and send me away from his house. May you seek to be honoured by me and I by you, so that harm will not come upon [either] you or me. Do not become inflamed with desire, or you will burn your garments.[145] Rather, remain in honour on your own, and I [will

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[140] Luke 6:35; Galatians 3:28

[141] Matthew 25:7-10

[142] A: "curses"

[143] Isaiah 56:5

[144] Here it is not the woman playing the provocative (even Satanic) role, but the man.

[145] Proverbs 6:27

remain] alone in my honour. These are the ones whom the Bridegroom is preparing for his eternal wedding feast. Make yourself a wedding gift and prepare yourself to meet him, and I will prepare oil so that I might enter in with the wise and not be left outside the door with the foolish virgins.'

8. Pay attention to what I am writing to you concerning what is appropriate for single ones, the covenanters ([who are] virgins), and holy ones. In the first place, the man[146] upon whom the yoke is laid ought to have a firm faith, as I wrote to you in the first letter. He should be diligent in fasting and prayer, intense in his love for Christ, and humble and moderate and reasonable. Let his speech be peaceful and pleasant, and let his mind be clear toward everyone. Let him weigh his words carefully, and set a fence against harmful words around his mouth, and may foolish laughter be far from him. He should not love the adornment of clothing, nor let his hair grow long in order to decorate it, nor should he anoint it with aromatic oils. He should not recline at banquets, nor is it appropriate for him to wear fancy clothing. He should not boldly drink too much wine, and a proud mind should be far from him. It is not appropriate for him to look at fancy clothing, or to wear stylish cloaks. He should get rid of a deceitful tongue, put away envy and strife, and cast away lying lips. When words are spoken about a person who is not present, let [the covenanter] not listen or receive [such words], so as to not sin, until he investigates [the matter]. Mockery is a repulsive blemish, and it is wrong for it to arise in the heart. He should not demand interest when lending, nor should he love greed. He should suffer wrong but not do wrong [to others]. Let him stay away from commotion, and not speak frivolous words. He should not scoff at the person who repents of his sins, nor mock his brother who is fasting, nor shame the one who is not able to fast. Where he is received, let him rebuke, but where they do not receive him, let him keep his honour. At an appropriate time let him speak his word, but [if there is no opportunity] let him

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[146] Syr. ܠܓܒܪܐ, not ܠܩܝܡܐ, indicating that Aphrahat is speaking of males and not covenanters in general.

be silent. He should not despise himself on account of the demands of his stomach, but should reveal his secret to one who fears God, and keep himself from the Evil One. He should not respond to an evil man, nor to his enemy. Let him fight in such a way as to have no enemies at all. When they envy him because of what is good, let him add to his goodness and not be plagued by jealousy. When he is able to give to the poor, let him rejoice, but when he is not able, he should not be sad. Let him not be acquainted with[147] an evil person, nor let him speak with an disgraceful man, so that he will not give himself over to disgrace. He should not dispute with a blasphemous man, or his Lord will be reviled because of him. He should stay away from the slanderer, and should not try to make one person pleasing to another with flattering words. These things are fitting for single ones, those who have received the heavenly yoke and have become disciples of Christ. It is fitting for disciples of Christ to be like their Lord.[148]

9. My friend, let us accept the pattern of our Lifegiver. Though he was rich he made himself poor,[149] and though he was exalted he humbled his greatness. Though his dwelling-place was on high, he had no place to lay his head.[150] Though he will come on the clouds,[151] he rode on a colt and entered Jerusalem.[152] Though he is God and Son of God, he took on the likeness of a servant.[153] Though he brought rest from all labours, he was wearied from the work of the journey.[154] Though he was a fountain that quenched thirst, he grew thirsty and asked for water to drink.[155] Though he was fullness and satisfied our hunger, he hungered when he went

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[147] B: "Let him not respond to"; ܥܢܝܢܐ instead of ܥܢܝܢܐ
[148] A: "For our Lord said to his disciples that they should be like him."
[149] Philippians 2:6-8
[150] Matthew 8:20
[151] Daniel 7:13; Matthew 26:64
[152] John 12:14-15
[153] Philippians 2:7
[154] John 4:6
[155] John 6:7

out to the wilderness to be tempted.[156] Though he was a Watcher who does not slumber,[157] he slumbered and slept in the ship in the middle of the sea.[158] Though he had been ministered to in the tabernacle of his Father,[159] he was ministered to by human hands. Though he was the Healer of all sick people,[160] nails were driven into his hands.[161] Though his mouth brought forth good things,[162] they gave him gall to eat.[163] Though he did not harm or hurt anyone,[164] he was beaten with blows and endured shame. Though he was the Saviour of all mortals, he delivered himself up to death on a Cross.

10. Our Lifegiver showed us all this humility in himself. Let us therefore humble ourselves, my friends. When our Lord went outside of his natural condition, he walked in our natural condition. Let us remain in our natural condition, so that on the day of judgement he might make us partakers of his natural condition. Our Lord took from us a pledge and departed, and he left his own pledge with us[165] when he ascended. Through him who had no need this way was found because of our need. What belonged to us was his from the beginning, but who could have given us what belonged to him? For what our Lord promised us is true: *"Where I am you also will be."* [166] For that which he took from us is held in honour by him, and a diadem is tied upon his[167] head.[168] So too, we ought

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[156] Matthew 4:2; Luke 4:2

[157] Psalm 121:4

[158] Matthew 8:24; Mark 4:38; Luke 8:23

[159] A: "Though he was glorious in the tabernacle of the Father"; ܡܫܒܚܐ instead of ܡܫܬܡܫܢܐ

[160] Matthew 9:12; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31

[161] Psalm 22:17

[162] Psalm 49:4

[163] Psalm 69:22; Matthew 27:24

[164] Isaiah 53:9

[165] 2Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:14

[166] John 14:3

[167] The pronoun seems to be referring to the human body that Jesus still inhabits.

to honour what we have received from him. That which belonged to us is honoured by the one who was not in our natural condition. Let us honour that which is his in his natural condition. For if we honour him we will go to him, he who took from us and ascended. But if we despise him, he will take from us what he has given us, and if we deal fraudulently with his pledge, he will take away what is his, and withhold from us what he has promised us. Let us reverently magnify the Son of the King who is with us, because a hostage has been taken from us in his place. Whoever holds the Son of the King in honour will receive many gifts from the King. That which belongs to us, which is with him, has sat down in honour, and a diadem is tied to his head, and he has made him[169] sit down with the King. And we who are poor, what can we do for the Son of the King who is with us? Nothing is required of us for him except that we adorn our temples for him, so that when the time is fulfilled and he goes to his Father, he will give thanks for us, because we have honoured him. When he came to us, he did not possess anything that was ours, nor did we possess anything that was his: the two natures were his and his Father's. For when Gabriel announced his birth to Mary the blessed one, the Word proceeded from on high and came, and the Word became a body and lived among us. And when he returned to the one who sent him, that which he had not brought set out and went [also], as the apostle said, *"He raised us up and seated us with him in heaven."* [170] And when he went to his Father he sent us his Spirit and said to us, *"I am with you until the end of the world."* [171] For Christ sits at the right hand of his Father, but Christ [also] lives in people. He is able [to be both] above and below, by the wisdom of his Father. And though he is one, he lives in many. He watches over all of the faithful, one by one, but does not diminish [himself], as it is written: *"I will divide*

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[168] Hebrews 12:9

[169] Presumably: 'Christ has made the human body sit down with the King'

[170] Ephesians 2:6

[171] Matthew 28:20

him among many." [172] And though he is divided among many, he sits at the right hand of his Father. He is in us and we are in him, as He said: *"You are in me and I am in you."* [173] And in another place He said, *"I and my Father are one."* [174]

11. But if anyone whose conscience[175] is lacking in knowledge should dispute this and say, 'If Christ is one and his Father is one, how do Christ and his Father live in faithful[176] people? And how do righteous people become temples for God, so that he lives in them? For if Christ (and God who is in Christ) comes to various faithful people, then there are for them many Gods and innumerable Christs.' Hear, my friend, the response that is appropriate for this argument. Let the one who has spoken this way receive proof from what is visible. For every person knows that the sun has its place in heaven, yet its rays spread out over the earth. [Light] from the sun enters many doors and windows of houses, and even if it falls on [a space] no greater than the palm of the hand, it is [still] called 'the sun'. And even though it falls in many places it is named this way, while the substance of the sun is in heaven. If this is so, are there many suns? Likewise, the water of the sea is great, but when you take one cupful from it, it is [still] called 'water'. And even if you divided it into a thousand portions, it would [still] be called by its name: 'water'. When you light a fire from fires in many places, the place where it comes from is not diminished, and the fire is [still] called by one name. It does not take on many names just because you have divided it among many places. And when you take dust from the earth and throw it to many places, the dust is not diminished at all, nor are you able to call it by many names. In the same way, God and his Christ, though they are one, live in

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[172] Isaiah 53:12

[173] John 14:20

[174] John 10:30

[175] Syr. ܕܡܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ . The word is relatively infrequent in the *Demonstrations*, occurring only six other times: 7.25; 9.4; 14.14; 14.34; 15.2 (twice). The verb upon which this noun is based (ܗܝܡܢ) is not used by Aphrahat.

[176] A omits "faithful"

many people. In their substance they are in heaven, yet they are not diminished at all when they live in many [people], just as the sun is not diminished at all when its power is loosed upon the earth. How much greater, then, is the power of God, since it is by the power of God that the sun exists.

12. Let me remind you again of what is written, my friend. For it is written that when it became a burden for Moses to govern the camp alone, the Lord said to him, *"I am taking from the spirit that is upon you and giving it to seventy men, elders of Israel."* [177] And when he took from the spirit of Moses and the seventy men were filled with it, Moses did not lack anything, nor was his spirit aware that anything had been taken from it. The blessed apostle also said, *"God divided the spirit of Christ and sent [it] into the prophets."* [178] And Christ was not harmed in any way, for his Father did not give him the Spirit by measure.[179] By reflecting on this you can be persuaded that Christ lives in faithful people, but is not harmed in any way when he is divided among many. For the prophets received of the Spirit of Christ, each one as much as he could sustain. And today the Spirit of Christ is poured out on all people and they prophesy: sons and daughters, old men and young people, male and female servants.[180] Something of Christ is in us, yet Christ is in heaven at the right hand of his Father. And Christ did not receive only a measure of the Spirit, but rather his Father loved him and delivered everything into his hands, and gave him authority over his whole treasury. For John said, *"The Father did not give only a portion of the Spirit to his Son, but loved him and delivered everything into his hands."* [181] And our Lord also said, *"Everything has been handed over to me by my*

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[177] Numbers 11:16-17

[178] Cf. 1Corinthians 12:11; Romans 12:3-6. Bucur (2008) claims that this is almost certainly a quotation of the pseudepigraphical 3Corinthians 2:10. Cf. 23.20, where another possible use of this text occurs.

[179] John 3:34

[180] Joel 2:28

[181] John 3:34-35

Father." [182] And again He said, *"The Father will not judge anyone, but will give all judgement to his Son."* [183] The apostle also said, *"Everything will be subjected to Christ, except his Father, who has subjected everything to him. And when everything has been subjected to him by his Father, then he will be subjected to God his Father, who subjected everything to him, and God will be all in all, and in every person."* [184]

13. Our Lord testifies concerning John that he is the greatest of the prophets.[185] He received only a measure of the Spirit, for he obtained the Spirit in the same amount as Elijah. Just as Elijah lived in the wilderness, so too the Spirit of God led John into the wilderness, and he lived on mountains and in caves.[186] Birds brought food to Elijah,[187] and John ate flying locusts.[188] Elijah girded his loins with a leather strap,[189] and John girded his loins with a leather belt. Jezebel persecuted Elijah,[190] and Herodia persecuted John.[191] Elijah rebuked Ahab,[192] and John rebuked Herod.[193] Elijah divided the Jordan,[194] and John opened up baptism. The spirit of Elijah rested two-fold upon Elisha,[195] and John placed his hand on our Saviour, and he received the Spirit without measure. Elijah opened the heavens and ascended,[196] and John saw the heavens open and the Spirit of God came down and rested on our Saviour.[197] Elisha

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[182] Matthew 11:27
[183] John 5:22
[184] 1Corinthians 15:27-28
[185] Matthew 11:11-14
[186] Matthew 3;1; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:2
[187] 1Kings 17:6
[188] Matthew 3:4; Mark 1:6
[189] 2Kings 1:8
[190] 1Kings 19:1-2
[191] Mark 6:19-28
[192] 1Kings 18:17; 21:17-24
[193] Mark 6:18; Luke 3:19
[194] 2Kings 2:8
[195] 2Kings 2:9-10
[196] 2Kings 2:11; Sirach 48:9
[197] Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:33

received twofold of the spirit of Elijah, and our Saviour received from John and from heaven. Elisha received the cloak of Elijah,[198] and our Saviour [received] the laying on of hands of the priests. Elisha made oil from water,[199] and our Saviour made wine from water.[200] With a little bread, Elisha satisfied a hundred men,[201] but our Saviour satisfied five thousand men (not counting women and children) with a little bread.[202] Elisha cleansed Namaan the leper,[203] but our Saviour cleansed ten [lepers].[204] Elisha cursed [some] children and they were eaten by bears,[205] but our Saviour blessed children.[206] Children scorned Elisha, but children glorified our Saviour with hosannas.[207] Elisha cursed Gehazi his disciple,[208] and our Saviour cursed Judas his disciple,[209] but blessed all of his [other] disciples.[210] Elisha brought back to life only one person,[211] but our Saviour brought three people back to life. One dead person came to life because of the bones of Elisha,[212] but our Saviour, when he went to the house of the dead, gave life to many and raised them up. Many are the signs performed by the Spirit of Christ, of which the prophets received.

14. We too, my friend, have received of the Spirit of Christ, and Christ lives in us, since it is written that the Spirit said through the

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198 2Kings 2:13
199 2Kings 4:1-7
200 John 2:1-11
201 2Kings 5:42-44
202 Matthew 14:21; Luke 9:14; John 6:10-11
203 2Kings 5:1-14
204 Luke 17:12-19
205 2Kings 2:23-24
206 Mark 10:16
207 Matthew 21:15-16
208 2Kings 5:27
209 Matthew 26:24; A omits "his disciple"
210 Luke 24:50
211 2Kings 4:32-35
212 2Kings 13:21

mouth of the prophet,[213] *"I will live in them and I will walk in them."* [214] Now let us prepare our temples for the Spirit of Christ, and not weary [the Spirit] nor remove [the Spirit] from ourselves. Remember what the apostle warns [us] about: *"Do not weary the Holy Spirit, in whom you have been sealed for the day of salvation."* [215] From baptism we have received the Spirit of Christ, for at the moment when the priests invoke the Spirit, heaven opens and the Spirit descends and hovers over the water,[216] and those who are baptized put [the Spirit] on. For the Spirit stays away from all those who are born of the flesh, until they come to the water of [re]birth, and then receive the Holy Spirit. For in the first birth they are born with a natural spirit which is created within a person and is not subject to death, as it says, *"The man became a living soul."* [217] And in the second birth at baptism they receive the Holy Spirit from a small portion of the divinity,[218] which is also not subject to death. When people die, the natural spirit is hidden with the body and sensation is taken away from it, and the heavenly Spirit which they have received goes to its natural condition with Christ. The apostle has referred to both of these [spirits], for he said, *"The body is buried in a natural state but rises in a spiritual state."* [219] The Spirit returns to its natural condition with Christ, for the apostle also said, *"When we depart from the body we will be with our Lord."* [220] For the Spirit of Christ, that which our spirits have received, goes to be with Christ, and the natural spirit is buried in its natural condition, and sensation is taken away from it. In the case of the one who guards the Spirit of Christ in purity, when [that Spirit] goes to Christ it says to him, 'The body into which I went and which put me on at the waters of baptism has guarded me in holiness.' And the Holy Spirit will urge Christ to resurrect

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[213] A: "through the mouth of Isaiah the prophet"
[214] Leviticus 26:11; cf. Isaiah 66:1-2
[215] Ephesians 4:30
[216] Cf. Genesis 1:2
[217] Genesis 2:7; 1Corinthians 15:45
[218] A omits "from a small portion of the divinity"
[219] 1Corinthians 15:44
[220] 2Corinthians 5:8

that body which kept it in purity, and will request to be rejoined to it so that that body will rise again in glory. [In the case of] the person who receives the Spirit from the waters [of baptism] but [then] grieves it, the Spirit departs from him before he dies and goes to its natural condition with Christ, and brings accusation against that person who grieved it. And when the time of the completion of the age comes, and the time of the resurrection draws near, the Holy Spirit which has been kept in purity receives great power from its nature, comes before Christ, stands at the entrance of the graves where those who have kept it in purity are buried, and waits for the shout. And when the watchers have opened the gates of heaven before the King, then the horn will sound and the trumpets will shout, and the Spirit that listens for the shout will hear and quickly open the tombs and raise up the bodies and that which was buried in them,[221] and the Spirit will put on that glory which came with it. The Spirit will be within for the resurrection of the body, and the glory will be on the outside for the adornment of the body. The natural spirit will be swallowed up in the heavenly Spirit and the whole person will become spiritual,[222] since his body is in the Spirit. Death will be swallowed up by life and the body will be swallowed up by the Spirit. And through the Spirit that person will fly to meet the King[223] who will receive him with joy, and Christ will give thanks for the body which has guarded the Spirit in purity.

15. This Spirit, my friend, is that which the prophets received, and which we too have [received]. It is not always found with the one who has received it. At times it goes to the one who has sent it, and at times it returns to the one who has received it. Listen to what our Lord said: *"Do not despise one of these little ones who believe in me, for their angels in heaven see the face of my Father at all times."* [224] This Spirit goes often and stands before God and sees his face, and accuses before God whoever harms the temple in which it dwells.

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[221] A: "raise up those bodies that were buried in them"
[222] 1Corinthians 15:54
[223] 1Thessalonians 4:17
[224] Matthew 18:10

16. I will explain to you that which is written: the Spirit is not always found in the one who has received it. For it is written that *"the Holy Spirit,"* which he had received when he was annointed, *"departed from Saul"* because he grieved it, and God sent him *"a consuming spirit"* in its place.[225] And whenever [Saul] was troubled by the evil spirit, David would play on his harp, and the Holy Spirit that he received when he was annointed would come, and the evil spirit that was consuming Saul would flee before it.[226] The Holy Spirit, which David had received, was not with him at all times. It would come to him when he was playing the harp. If it was with him at all times it would not have allowed him to sin with the wife of Uriah. For when he was praying about his sins and confessing his transgressions before God, he said, *"Do not take your Holy Spirit from me."* [227] It is also written concerning Elisha: *"While he played on his harp, then the Spirit came upon him and he prophesied: 'Thus says the Lord: 'You will see neither wind nor rain, and this valley will be made into many pits.'"* [228] And when the Shulammite woman came to him because of her son who had died, he said to her, *"The Lord has hidden [it] from me and will not reveal [it] to me."* [229] And when the king of Israel sent for him so as to kill him, the Spirit made [his intention] known to him before the messenger came, and he said to himself, *"This evildoer has sent for me to take off my head."* [230] [The Spirit] also informed [him] about the abundance that had come to Samaria the next day,[231] and informed him when Gehazi stole silver and concealed [it].[232]

17. Therefore, my friend, when the Holy Spirit departs from a person who has received it, while it is going and coming [back] to

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[225] 1Samuel 16:14
[226] 1Samuel 16:18-23
[227] Psalm 51:13
[228] 2Kings 3:15-17
[229] 2Kings 4:27
[230] 2Kings 6:32
[231] 2Kings 7:1-2
[232] 2Kings 5:26

him, then Satan attacks that person to make him stumble, so that the Holy Spirit might abandon him altogether. For as long as the Spirit is with a person, Satan fears to come near him. Observe, my friend, that even our Lord, who was born of the Spirit, was not tempted by Satan until he received the Spirit in baptism from on high. Then the Spirit led him out to be tempted by Satan. But this is the way things are for a person: in the hour in which he perceives in his soul that he is not fervent in the Spirit and his heart is falling into attachment to this world, let him understand that the Spirit is not with him, and let him rise up and pray and keep vigil, so that the Spirit of God might come back to him and he might not be conquered by the Adversary. For a thief does not break into a house until he sees its owner leaving it. In the same way, Satan cannot approach this house which is the body until the Spirit of Christ departs from it. Be assured, my friend, that the thief does not know if the owner of the house is inside or not until he listens and looks. If he hears the voice of the owner of the house inside it, and he says, "I have a journey to go on," [then,] when he has made sure and has seen the owner of the house depart to conduct his business, the thief goes and breaks into the house and steals. But if he hears the voice of the owner of the house warning and issuing orders to the servants of his household to be vigilant and to guard the house, saying to them, "I too am [staying] in the house," then the thief becomes afraid and flees, so as not to be taken and captured. In the same way, Satan does not have the foreknowledge to know or to see when the Spirit departs when he comes to plunder a person, but he too listens and keeps watch, and [then] suddenly attacks. For if he hears a person in whom Christ dwells speaking hateful words or becoming angry or quarrelling or fighting, then he knows that Christ is not with that person, and he comes and accomplishes his will in him. For Christ lives in those who are peaceful and humble, and remains with those who tremble at his word, as He said in the prophet, *"Whom do I watch over and in whom do I live, if not those who are peaceful and humble, and who tremble at my word?"* [233] And our Lord said, *"Whoever walks in my commands and keeps my love,*

[233] Isaiah 66:2

we will come to him and make our home in him." [234] If [Satan] hears that a person is on his guard and praying and meditating on the Law of his Lord day and night, then he turns away from him, because he knows that Christ is with him. Now, you might say, 'How manifold Satan is, since he fights against many!' But listen and be persuaded from what I taught you above concerning Christ, that he is divided among many but is not in any way diminished. Just as a house is full of light when a little sunlight enters through a window, so a person is full of darkness when a little of Satan enters into him. Hear what the apostle said: *"If Satan can appear as an angel of light, it is no great difficulty for his servants to appear as servants of righteousness."* [235] And our Lord said to his disciples, *"I have given you power to trample on the army of the Adversary."* [236] The scriptures make known that he has an army and ministers. And Job said concerning him that *"God has caused him to make war."* [237] However, be aware that he will not fight openly, since from the time of his coming [Christ] gave [us] power over him, but he certainly plunders and steals.

18. I will now explain to you, my friend, that word which the apostle spoke, by which deceitful schools (the instruments of the Evil One) may be weighed. For the apostle said, *"There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. As it is written: "The first Adam became a living soul, and the second Adam a life-giving spirit."* [238] They say that there are two Adams. But he said, *"Just as we have put on the image of the Adam who is of the earth, so too will we put on the image of the Adam who is from heaven."* [239] For the Adam of the earth is the one who sinned, but the Adam from heaven is our Lifegiver, our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, those who receive the Spirit of Christ come to resemble the heavenly Adam, who is our Lifegiver, our Lord Jesus Christ. For the natural will be swallowed up in the spiritual, as I

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[234] John 14:23
[235] 2Corinthians 11:14-15
[236] Luke 10:19
[237] Job 40:14
[238] 1Corinthians 15:44
[239] 1Corinthians 15:49

wrote to you above. And the person who grieves the Spirit of Christ will have a natural resurrection, since the heavenly Spirit is not with him to swallow up the natural spirit. When he rises, he will remain in his natural condition, stripped of the Spirit, [and] since he stripped the Spirit of Christ he will be given over to great shame.[240] But whoever honours the Spirit, protecting it in purity, on that day the Holy Spirit will protect him and he will become altogether spiritual, and will not be found naked, as the apostle said, *"It is hoped that when we clothe ourselves,*[241] *we will not be found naked."* [242] And again he said, *"We will all sleep, but in the resurrection we will not all be changed."* [243] And again he said, *"That which dies will put on that which does not die, and that which is corrupted will put on that which is incorruptible. And when that which dies puts on that which does not die, and that which is corruptible [puts on] that which is incorruptible, then the word that is written will be fulfilled: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.'"* [244] He also said, *"Suddenly, in the blink of an eye, the dead will rise incorruptible, and we will be changed."* [245] Those who are changed put on the image of that heavenly Adam and become spiritual. But those who are not changed remain in their natural condition, in the created nature of Adam, who is of the dust, and they remain in their natural condition on the earth below. Then those who are spiritual will be taken up to heaven, and the Spirit which they have put on will make them fly, and they will inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for them from the beginning. But those who are natural will remain on the earth because of the weight of their bodies, and will return to Sheol, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.[246]

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[240] The Syriac word for "shame" can also mean "nakedness".

[241] B: "when we lay ourselves bare" (ܕܥܠܣ instead of ܕܠܚܥ), perhaps referring to the 'stripping off' of the physical body at death.

[242] 2Corinthians 5:3

[243] 1Corinthians 15:51

[244] 1Corinthians 15:53-54

[245] 1Thessalonians 4:17

[246] Psalm 9:18; Matthew 8:12

19. I have written these things to remind myself as well as you, my friend. Therefore, love virginity, the heavenly portion, the fellowship of the watchers of heaven, for there is nothing that compares to it. Christ lives in those who live that way. The summer has drawn near and the fig tree has blossomed and its leaves have come out.[247] The signs that our Saviour spoke of are beginning to be fulfilled. For He said, *"People will rise against people and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and plagues and terrors from heaven."* [248] All these things are being fulfilled in our days.

20. Read what I have written to you: you and the brothers, the covenanters, those who love virginity.[249] Be on your guard against mockers, for if anyone mocks or scoffs at his brother, the word that is written in the Gospel (when our Lord wanted to challenge the greedy and the Pharisees) is fulfilled against him. For it is written: *"Because they were lovers of money, they mocked him."* [250] Even now, all those who do not agree with this mock in the same way. Read and learn, and be zealous to read and to act. Let this Law of God be your meditation at all times. And when you read this letter, by your life, my friend, rise and pray, and remember my sinfulness [251] in your prayer.

The demonstration on the convenanters is completed.

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[247] Matthew 24:32; cf. Song of Songs 2:13
[248] Matthew 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:10-12
[249] A: "virginity and holiness"
[250] Luke 16:14
[251] A: "my exhortation"; ܠܣܦܝܬܘܬܝ instead of ܠܣܛܝܘܬܝ

DEMONSTRATION 7: *ON THE PENITENT*

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II. TRANSLATION

1. There has been only one innocent[1] person among all those who have been born and put on flesh: our Lord Jesus Christ, as he testifies concerning himself. For He said, *"I have overcome the world."* [2] The prophet also testifies concerning him: *"He did nothing wicked, nor was deceit found in his mouth."* [3] The blessed apostle said, *"[God] made him sin for us, he who did not know sin."* [4] How was he made sin, if not in the sense that he lifted sin up and nailed it on his Cross, while not commiting it? [5] Again, the apostle says: *"Many run the race, but only one takes the crown."* [6] Furthermore, there has been no other [person] among the descendants of Adam who, when he went into the struggle, was not beaten and struck, for sin reigned from the time that Adam transgressed the commandment.[7] For it had been struck by many and it had beaten many and killed many, but no one among the many killed sin, until the coming of our Saviour, who lifted it up and nailed it to his Cross. Though it is nailed to the Cross, its sting [still] exists,[8] and it will pierce many until the end comes when its sting will be broken.

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[1] Syr. ܙܟܝܐ . The word can also mean "victorious", which would also fit in this context.

[2] John 16:33

[3] Malachi 2:6; Isaiah 53:9

[4] 2Cor. 5:21. A adds: "so that you might become the righteousness of God through him"

[5] Col. 2:14

[6] 1Cor. 9:24

[7] Rom. 5:14-21

[8] 1Cor. 15:55-56

2. For all illnesses there are remedies; they are cured when a wise physician finds them. For those who have been struck in our struggle there is the remedy of repentance, which they place on their abscesses, and they are healed. O physicians, disciples of our wise Physician, obtain for yourselves this remedy with which you might heal the wounds of sicknesses! For when a wise physician is found for those warriors who have been struck in the struggle by the one who has fought against them, a medicine that heals the wounded is distributed. And when the physician heals the one who has been injured in the war, he receives gifts and honour from the King. In this way, my friend, if there is anyone who labours in our struggle and his Enemy comes against him and injures him, it is appropriate to give him the remedy of repentance, as long as the regret of the wounded person is deep. God does not reject the one who repents, as the prophet Ezekiel said: *"I do not desire the death of the dead sinner, but that he might turn from his evil way and live."* [9]

3. He who has been wounded in the war is not ashamed to give himself into the hands of a wise physician, since the war overcame him and he was wounded. And when he is healed, the King will not reject him, but will count and include him in his army. Therefore, a person should not be ashamed that he has been struck by Satan, but should confess his wrongdoing and pass it by and should seek for himself the remedy of repentance. Indeed, whoever is ashamed to show his abscess ends up suffering from gangrene, and his whole body comes to harm. But whoever is not ashamed, his abscess is healed, and he turns again to enter into the struggle. Whoever has gangrene is not able to be healed again, or to put on the armour that he has taken off. Therefore, there is a way to be healed for whoever is defeated in our struggle: let him say, 'I have sinned' and seek repentance. Whoever is ashamed, however, is not able to be healed, since he does not wish to make known his wounds to the physician, who has received two denarii with which to look after all those who are wounded.[10]

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[9] Ezekiel 33:11
[10] Luke 10:35

4. It is also appropriate that you physicians, disciples of our Glorious Physician, not withhold medicine from the one who needs to be healed. Give the remedy of repentance to [the person] who shows you his abscess. Advise [the person] who is ashamed to show you his sickness that he should not hide from you. And when he shows [it] to you, do not make it known, lest on account of this [even] the victors might be considered, by enemies and adversaries, to be defeated. [For on account of] the line [of battle] where the slain are falling feebleness will be attributed to all of them by their adversaries. When those who have been wounded are found among those who have not been struck, they heal their sicknesses but do not reveal them to their adversaries. If they make them known to everyone, however, the whole camp receives a bad name. Furthermore, the King who leads the army will be angry at those who have exposed his camp, and they will be beaten with worse blows than those that they received in the war.

5. If those who have been wounded do not wish to reveal their injuries, the doctors are not to blame for not healing the sick who have been injured. If those who have been injured decide to conceal their wounds, they can then no longer put on their armour, since they have developed gangrene on their bodies. If they have gangrene and they are determined to put on armour, when they enter into the struggle their armour will heat them up, their abscesses will become putrid and decay, and they will be killed. When those from whom they had hidden their abscesses find their corpses, they will then laugh at all their shame, since they had concealed the sicknesses of their wounds, and they will not even bury their corpses, considering them foolish, evil, and headstrong.

6. The one who has shown his abscess and has been healed must be attentive to the healed area, so that he might not be struck there a second time. The healing of the one who is struck twice is difficult, even for a wise physician, since not every wound over a scar can be healed. Even if it is healed well, armour cannot be worn.[11]

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[11] This may mean that those who have broken their ascetic vows twice

And even if he is determined to put on armour, he will be continually defeated.

7. You who have put on the armour of Christ, learn the intricacies of war, so that you might not be defeated and weary in the struggle! Our enemy is cunning and clever, but his armour is inferior to ours. It is right for us, therefore, to turn against him and to take away his weapon (which is sleep) with vigilance. He is invisible when he attacks us, but let us turn to the one who sees him, so that he might remove him from us.

8. I exhort you, therefore, you who have been wounded, not to be ashamed to say, 'We have yielded in the struggle.' Take for yourselves the priceless remedy; repent and live, while you have not [yet] been killed. And you physicians, I remind you of what is written in the books of our wise Physician, namely, that he did not forbid repentance. For when Adam sinned, he called to him to repent, saying to him, *"Adam, where are you?"* [12] But he hid his sin from the one who examines the heart; his excuse was that Eve had deceived him. Because he did not confess his wrongdoing, [God] decreed death for him and for all his offspring.[13] It was the same with Cain, who was full of deceit and whose offering was not received: the opportunity to repent was given to him, but he refused. For [God]

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in the same way are no longer considered to be covenanters, even though the 'wound' has been 'healed'. On the other hand, it is hard to imagine anyone being able to avoid falling short of fulfilling their vows only twice. Could one have been a covenanter without entering into battle? This is ruled out by the clear use of the battle metaphor in sections 18-22 to describe the life of covenanters. Perhaps then the kinds of wounds that could not be endured twice without losing warrior status were very serious, like sexual misconduct. It is not outside of the realm of possibility, but it seems unlikely that one would cease to be a covenanter for repeating a minor (?) offence such as being impatient with a fellow ascetic. There would have been the practical problem of confirming that such offences had in fact taken place.

[12] Genesis 3:9.

[13] Genesis 3:10-19

said to him, *"If you act rightly, I will receive your offering, but if you do not act rightly, your sin will stay with you."* [14] He killed his brother by the deceit of his heart, and he was cursed, and roamed and wandered on the earth.[15] It is the same with the generation that lived in the days of Noah, to whom God gave one hundred and twenty years for repentance.[16] They did not wish to repent, and God obliterated them after the completion of one hundred years.[17]

9. See, my friend, how much better it is for a man to acknowledge his iniquity and to withdraw himself from it, for our God does not reject those who repent. Indeed, the sins of the Ninevites were very great. But they accepted the proclamation of Jonah when he preached ruin[18] to them. They repented, and God had compassion on them.[19] When the offences of the Israelites had multiplied, [God] called them to repent, but they did not listen to him. For He called to them through Jeremiah, who said, *"Repent, you followers of apostasy, and I will heal your rebellion."* [20] He also preached to the ears of Jerusalem and said to her, *"Return to me, wayward daughter."* [21] And again He said to the Israelites, *"Repent, and turn from your wicked ways and from the wickedness of your deeds."* [22] Here is what he said to the people: *"If you turn to me I will cause you to return, and you will stand before me."* [23] He also said and reproached them: *"I said, 'Return to me with all your heart, inhabitants of Israel', but you did not repent."* [24] He also applied a parable to them, and reminded them of what is written in

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[14] Genesis 4:7
[15] Genesis 4:8-12
[16] Genesis 6:3
[17] Genesis 7:6
[18] Syr. ܗܦܟܬܐ . The word can also mean "reversal" or "return" (among other things), and as such could refer to the Ninevites repentance rather than their impending doom.
[19] Jonah 3
[20] Jeremiah 3:22
[21] Jeremiah 3:12
[22] Jonah 3:8
[23] Jeremiah 3:12; 4:1; 15:19
[24] Jeremiah 3:7,10

the Law, since he wanted to make an exception to the Law by their repentance. For he said, *"When a man takes a wife and this wife leaves him to be with another man, if the other man who has taken her dies or sends her away and she returns to be with her first husband it is not lawful for her first husband to take her back again after she has been defiled. For if he takes her back, the land is completely defiled!* [25] *I have taken you to myself, Jerusalem, and you are mine,*[26] *but you have left me and gone and prostituted yourself among rocks and trees.*[27] *Return to me now and I will receive you;* [28] *for the sake of your repentance I will overturn the Law."* [29]

10. You who have repented need not fear that you will be cut off from the hope which is written about in the scriptures; it is right that the Spirit of God should warn us in this way. For he placed a fearful warning in the prophet Ezekiel, when he said to him, *"If a man does what is right and just all his days but in his last days does evil, he will die in his evil state. If a man does evil all his days but repents and does what is just and right, he will save himself."* [30] By this one message the Spirit warned the righteous man, so that he might not sin and lose his way. And he gave hope to the wicked man, that he might leave his wickedness and live. Again, he said to Ezekiel, *"If I cut off the wicked man's hope, you must certainly still warn him. And when I give strong encouragement to the righteous man, place fear before him so that he might be on guard. When I say to the wicked man 'you will surely die' and you do not warn him, the wicked man will die in his iniquity, but his blood will be on your hands because you did not warn him. But if you warn the sinner, he will live because you have warned him, and you will save yourself. When you say to the*

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[25] Jeremiah 3:1, drawing on Deut. 24:1-4

[26] Cf. Isaiah 54:4-8

[27] Jeremiah 3:9, but also throughout 3:1-13

[28] Malachi 3:7; cf. Jeremiah 3:12

[29] This last phrase appears to be creative elaboration on the part of Aphrahat. The word "overturn" probably means that the punishment that would normally be applied will be withheld upon repentance (my thanks to Harry Fox for making this suggestion). This fits well with the earlier reference to God making an "exception" to the Law. The notion that God would overturn the Law appears nowhere else in the *Demonstrations*.

[30] Ezekiel 33:12-15; 18:21-24

righteous man, 'You will surely live', and he trusts in himself on account of this, it is proper for you to warn him, lest he become too proud and sin. The one who has been warned will live, and you will save yourself." [31] Listen again, you who repent, to the one who extends his hand and calls you to repentance. For he has also spoken through the prophet Jeremiah and given repentance. This is what he said: *"If I speak against a people or a kingdom to uproot it, to pull it down, to overthrow it, or to destroy it, and if that people repents of its evil, I will turn away from it the disaster I had decreed for it. And if I speak to a people or to a kingdom to build it up, to plant it, and as a result it puts its trust in itself, and does evil before me, I will then turn away from it the good that I had promised. And because of its wickedness and sins I will destroy it."* [32]

11. Listen also, you who hold the keys to the gates[33] of heaven, and open the gates for those who repent. They are signified by what the blessed apostle says: *"If anyone among you is struggling with wrongdoing, those of you who are spiritual should lead him back with a humble spirit, but be careful, lest you too are tempted."* [34] The apostle was afraid, so he warned them. For he said to himself, *"...lest I myself, who have preached to others, am rejected."* [35] Do not treat as an adversary the one among you who is struggling with wrongdoing, but rather counsel him and admonish him as a brother, for when you separate him from yourselves, he will be attacked by Satan.[36] Again, he said, *"We who have prevailed and are steadfast* [37] *ought to bear the sickness of the sick."* [38] He also said, *"Let not the lame be cast down, but rather healed."* [39]

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[31] Ezekiel 3:17-21; 33:7-9

[32] Jeremiah 18:7-10

[33] Here and for the next occurrence, A has "gate".

[34] Galatians 6:1

[35] 1Cor. 9:27

[36] 2Thessalonians 3:15

[37] Syr. ܕܚܝܒܝܢ ܚܢܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܫܪܪܝܢ . A slightly different vocalization on the first word would yield: "We who are steadfast are obligated…"

[38] Romans 15:1

[39] Hebrews 12:13

12. I speak also to those of you who have repented, so that you might not fail to make use of this path which is given for healing. For it says in scripture, *"God will have mercy on the one who confesses his sins and removes himself from them."* [40] Consider the son who squandered his possessions: when he returned to be with his father he rejoiced over him and received him and killed the fattened bull for him. His father rejoiced because of his repentance, and he also called his friends so that they might rejoice with him. His father embraced him and kept kissing him, and said, *"This son of mine was dead but now lives, and was lost but is now found!"* [41] And his father did not find fault with him for squandering his possessions.

13. Our Lord gave encouragement to those who repent, when he said, *"I have not come to call the righteous to repentance, but sinners."* [42] He also said, *"There is more joy in heaven over the one sinner who repents than over the ninety-nine righteous who have no need of repentance."* [43] Among the whole flock, the shepherd is more concerned about the sheep that has strayed than about those that have not strayed.[44] For Christ died for sinners, not for the righteous, as he said in the prophet: *"He carried the sins of many."* [45] And the apostle said, *"If, when we sin, God is reconciled with us through the death of his Son, how much more will we live through his life, now that we are reconciled!"* [46]

14. God will forgive whoever confesses his wrongdoing. Indeed, when David had sinned, the prophet Nathan went to him and declared his sin to him, and the punishment he was going to receive. Then David confessed and said, *"I have sinned."* And the prophet said to him, *"Now the Lord has taken away your wrongdoing, because you*

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[40] Proverbs 28:13
[41] Luke 15:32
[42] Luke 5:32
[43] Luke 15:7
[44] Matthew 18:12-14
[45] Isaiah 53:12
[46] Romans 5:10

have confessed." [47] When David prayed, this is what he said: *"Against you alone have I sinned, and I have done evil before you."* [48] Again, David entreated God and said, *"Do not bring your servant to judgement, for no one living is righteous before you."* [49] Solomon also said, *"Who can say, 'You are righteous, my heart, and cleansed from sins'?"* [50] It is also written in the Law that Moses prayed before God and said, *"You forgive iniquity and sin, but by no means do you justify."* [51] And when God wanted to wipe out his people on account of their sins, Moses spoke as follows when he prayed and made supplication to [Him]: *"Forgive the wrongdoing of your people, as you have forgiven them from the time they were in Egypt up to this day."* And God said to him, *"I forgive them, according to your word."* [52]

15. You who seek repentance, be like Aaron the chief priest who, when he caused the people to sin through the calf, confessed his sin and his Lord forgave him.[53] David, too, the greatest of the kings of Israel,[54] confessed his folly and was forgiven. Consider also Simon, the leader of the disciples, when he made his denial (*"Christ has not been seen by me"*), and cursed and swore (*"I have not known him!"*).[55] When regret came over him and he multiplied[56] the tears of his weeping, our Lord received him and made him the foundation, and called him 'Peter', the structure of the Church.

16. Do not be foolish, like Adam, who was ashamed to acknowledge his wrongdoing. Also, do not resemble Cain who, when he was accused of killing his brother, said, *"I don't know where Abel is,*

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[47] 2Samuel 12:13
[48] Psalm 51:6
[49] Psalm 143:2
[50] Proverbs 20:9
[51] Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:18
[52] Numbers 14:19-20
[53] Exodus 32:21-25
[54] A omits "of Israel"
[55] Matthew 26:74; Mark 14:71; Luke 22:60
[56] A: "But he washed his sins with"

since I am not his guardian!" [57] Do not remain in a way of thinking that is pretentious, like that of a generation which corrupts. Do not multiply wickedness upon wickedness, and do not multiply your sins, declaring yourselves innocent when in fact you are guilty. Listen to our forefathers, who also humbled themselves, even though they were righteous. For Abraham said, *"I am dust and ashes,"* [58] and placed himself in a low position. David also said, *"A person's days are like a vapour."* [59] And Solomon said by way of warning, *"If the righteous live with difficulty, where will the sinner or the wicked man be found?"* [60]

17. I beseech you, my friend, by the mercy of God, that you will not fall away from your steadfastness and have need of repentance on account of me writing to you that God does not reject the penitent. Repentance is given only to the needy; let it be [the case] that you are not in need of it. This hand is extended to sinners, but the righteous do not require it. For alms are given to the poor, but the rich have no need of them. The man who has been stripped bare by thieves is given [clothes], so that he might dress himself and cover his nakedness,[61] of which he is ashamed. Do not lose what belongs to you, lest you become wearied by looking for it, whether you find it or not. Furthermore, [even] if you find again what was yours, it is not the same thing. The one who has transgressed and has repented is not equal to the one from whom wrongdoing is far away. You have taken delight in the portion that is above; keep yourself far away from all degeneration. Gird yourself with your excellent armour so that you might not be struck in war. Don't be in need of having to seek out a remedy, or having to trouble yourself with going to a physician. For even when you have been healed well, those scars are still recognizable. Do not rely on the fact that

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[57] Genesis 4:9

[58] Genesis 18:27

[59] Psalms 144:3

[60] Proverbs 11:31

[61] Syr. ܕܢܟܣܐ ܦܘܪܣܝܗ . The term ܦܘܪܣܝܐ is a euphemism for nakedness. A literal rending would something like: "that which has been stretched out/unfolded".

medicine exists, thus giving yourself a bad name, but rather be a stranger to repentance. Whoever has a coat that is torn needs it to be repaired, but even if it is sewn well everyone can see the repair. Whoever has a break in his fence repairs it with hard work, but even if he repairs it well it is still called a 'break'. It is obvious when a house has been broken into by thieves, and it is only with hard work that the owner can retrieve what he has lost. He who cuts the fruit off a tree must wait a long time before it sprouts again and gives fruit. The person whose irrigation channel has burst must labour and toil before it is closed up again, and even if it is well repaired he fears that the water will grow strong and re-open the break. Whoever picks his vine at the time of its blossoming deprives himself of eating the grapes. The face of the one who steals is ashamed, and until he finds mercy he must labour and toil. The one whose work in the vineyard is slack receives his salary and lowers his head; he cannot ask for anything more. Whoever subdues the strength of his youth rejoices with the Ancient of Days. And whoever does not drink stolen waters[62] will rest beside the spring of life.

18. O you who have prepared yourselves for the struggle[63]: listen to the sound of the trumpet and take heart. I speak also to you who hold the trumpets: priests, scribes, and sages.[64] Call out and say to all the people, 'Let he who is afraid turn back from the struggle,[65] lest he cause his brother to become as disheartened as he is. And whoever has planted a vineyard, let him return to cultivate it, lest he think of it in the war and suffer defeat. And whoever is betrothed to a woman and wishes to marry her, let him return and rejoice with his woman. And let the one who is building a house

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[62] Cf. Proverbs 9:17.

[63] This could also be translated as: "O you who have been invited to the struggle".

[64] Syr. ܚܟܡ̈ܐ . Elsewhere the term is often translated simply as "the wise" or (in the singular) "the wise person", but here "sages" works well with "priests" and "scribes".

[65] Cf. Judges 7:3

return to it, lest he call it to mind and not fight [with] full [attention].'[66] It is the single ones who are ready for the struggle, since they set their faces toward what is before them and do not call to mind what is behind them,[67] for their treasures are before them, and whatever they plunder is for themselves; they will receive their reward abundantly. I say to you who sound the trumpets, that when you have finished issuing warnings keep watch over those who have returned, care for those who remain,[68] and send down to the waters of testing those who have vowed themselves to war. The waters approve every strong person, but those who are lazy will be found out there.

19. Understand this mystery, my friend, whose image Gideon has shown beforehand. When he assembled the people for war, the scribes admonished [them] with the words of the Law, and with the words which I wrote to you above, after which a large number of people left the army. And when only those who had been chosen for war were left, the Lord said to Gideon, *"Lead them down to the waters and test them there. Whoever laps the water with his tongue will hasten and take courage in going to war. But whoever falls on his belly to drink the water will be slack and weak while going to war."* [69] For great is this mystery, my friend, that Gideon has shown in advance: it is a type of baptism, and a mystery of the struggle, and an image of the single ones. For he warned the people in advance about the waters of testing, and when he had tested them with water, only three hundred men out of ten thousand were chosen to enter the struggle. This fulfills the word of our Lord, who said, *"Many are called, but few are chosen."* [70]

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[66] Cf. Deuteronomy 20:2-9

[67] Philippians 3:13

[68] If the three imperatives imply three classes of people to be ministered to, then "those who remain" are those who did not commit to baptism in the first place (i.e. catechumens).

[69] Judges 7:5

[70] Matthew 22:14

20. On account of this, it is fitting that those who sound the trumpets, the preachers of the Church, should call and warn all those who have made a covenant with God in advance of baptism, those who have vowed themselves to virginity and holiness, young unmarried men and women, and holy ones. Let the preachers warn them and say: 'Whoever has set his heart on the state of marriage, let him be married before baptism,[71] lest he fall in the struggle and be killed. And whoever is afraid of the conflict,[72] let him return, lest he cause his brothers to become as disheartened as he is. And whoever loves his property, let him turn away from the army, lest when the war overwhelms him he calls his property to mind and turns back to it. There is only shame for the one who turns away from the struggle. The one who turns away but who has not yet vowed himself nor put on armour is not blamed. But if any of those who have vowed themselves and have put on armour turn away from the struggle, they are ridiculed. The one who has emptied himself is ready for war, since he does not call to mind what is behind him nor turn back to it.'

21. When they have preached, and announced, and warned all those who have made a covenant with God, let them bring those who have been chosen for the struggle to the waters of baptism so that they might be tested. After baptism they will see who is strong and who is weak. The strong ought to take courage, but the lazy and the weak will openly turn from the struggle, lest when fighting overtakes them they conceal their weapons and take flight and suffer defeat.[73] For God said to Gideon, *"Lead down to the waters those who have vowed themselves."* And when the people had descended to the water, the Lord said to Gideon, *"All those who lap the water with the tongue like a dog, these are the ones who will go with you to war. And those who fall down to drink the water will not go with you to war."* Great is this

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[71] This clearly implies that baptism was not reserved for an ascetic elite.

[72] Literally: "this lot/portion of fighting"

[73] The test involved here occurs not at baptism itself but rather in the course of the spiritual warfare which follows (cf. n. 76 below).

mystery, my friend, whose sign was shown in advance to Gideon. For he said to him, *"All who lap the water like a dog ought to go to war."* Among all the animals that have been created with humans there is no other that loves its master like a dog, and which keeps watch over him day and night. Furthermore, even if its master beats it severely, it will not go away from him. And when it goes out hunting with its master, and a powerful lion happens upon his master, it will die for its master. Thus, the strong are those who are distinguished by the waters: they follow after their master like dogs, give themselves over to death for his sake, take up his fight courageously, and keep watch over him day and night. They bark like dogs as they meditate on the Law day and night. They love our Lord and lick his wounds when they receive his body, setting their eyes on it and licking it with their tongues as a dog licks its master. Those who do not meditate on the Law are called mute dogs because they are unable to bark. And those who are not diligent in fasting are called greedy dogs, who do not know how to satisfy themselves.[74] And those who are diligent in seeking mercy obtain the bread of children, which they leave for them.[75]

22. Again, the Lord said to Gideon, *"Those who fall down to drink the water should not go with you to war, lest they fall and are defeated in war."* For those who drink the water lazily show in advance[76] the mystery of the fall [into sin]. For this reason, my friend, it is right that those who have entered the struggle should not resemble those lazy ones, lest they turn away from the fight and become a disgrace to all their friends.

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[74] Isaiah 56:10-11

[75] Matthew 15:26

[76] It is not being claimed here that some of those had vowed themselves to an ascetic lifestyle would have, at baptism, 'shown in advance' their later falling into sin. Aphrahat distinguishes two groups among those who fall into sin: those for whom this is an exception, and those who are 'lazy', i.e. continually fall into sin. Aphrahat did not think that he could distinguished these two groups merely on the basis of the manner of their baptism. Rather, the story of the 'lazy' recruits 'shows in advance' that there will, inevitably, be some who do in fact fall into sin.

23. But hear this word, my friend: Do not trust in yourself or determine to sin on account of the fact that I have given you proofs from God's scriptures that he does not reject the penitent. Otherwise, because I have said these things to you, the one who has been wounded might become slack and not seek repentance. For this reason it is fitting that he remain in mourning all his days, lest he become proud and is condemned. The servant who commits an offence before his master changes his clothes so that he might be reconciled to his master, and he goes to him morning and night, hoping to be received in his presence. When his master sees that he is constantly with him, he forgives him his offence and is reconciled to him. For if he says to his master, 'I have committed an offence before you', his master has pity on him. But if after he commits an offence he says to his master, 'I have not sinned', he will only increase the anger of his master. My friend, remember the son who squandered his possessions: when he confessed to his father he forgave his many offences.[77] Likewise with the sinful woman who had committed many offences: when she brought them to our Lord, he forgave her many offences and had pity on her.[78] When Zacchaeus, who was a tax collector and sinner, confessed his sins, our Lord forgave him.[79] Our Saviour also said, *"I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance."* [80] For our Lord died on behalf of sinners,[81] and his coming was not in vain. The apostle also said of himself, *"I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a despised man, but God had mercy on me."* [82] Again, he said, *"Christ died for our sake."* [83] It is the sheep that wanders, out of the entire flock, whose master seeks it out, and when he finds it he rejoices.[84] There is joy among the watchers of heaven when a sinner turns from his iniquity. For the

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[77] Luke 15:11-32
[78] Luke 7:36-50
[79] Luke 19:1-10
[80] Luke 5:32
[81] Romans 5:6
[82] 1Timothy 1:13
[83] Romans 5:8
[84] Matthew 18:12-14; Luke 15:3-7

Father who is in heaven does not wish that even one of his little ones should perish, who have sinned and have need of repentance. Our Lord did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. Let us lift up from his suffering each one who is sick among us, and suffer agony over each one who stumbles.

24. When pain comes to one part of our body, we trouble ourselves with its abscess until it is healed. When one part of our body is glorious, the whole body is fair and beautiful, but when pain comes to one of our members, the whole body experiences fever. *"Whoever causes one of these little ones to stumble will fall into the sea with the millstone of an ass around his neck."* [85] The ruin of the one who rejoices over the misfortune of his brother will be quick. Whoever tramples his brother with his foot will not be pardoned. For the wound of the mocker there is no healing, and the debts of the scoffer will not be forgiven.[86] For whoever digs a pit falls into it, and whoever rolls a stone will find it rolling back on him. Let not the one who slips and falls say, 'May every person be as I am!' And let not the rich man who becomes poor say, 'May all the rich become as I am!' For if his request is heard, who will satisfy his needs?

25. I have written all these things to you, my friend, because it is in our generation that there are those who have vowed themselves to become single ones (covenanters) and holy ones. We struggle against our Adversary, and he, our Adversary, fights against us so that we might return to that state from which we, in our liberty,[87] are separated. There are among us those who have been defeated and struck [in war] yet who, having been defeated, proclaim themselves victorious. Nevertheless, we know the transgressions of those who hold to this position, and who do not wish to be brought to repentance. Because of their shame they will die the

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[85] Matthew 18:6

[86] This is strong language, conditioned no doubt by the position Aphrahat thought his Church had put itself into by its lapses into unloving behaviour (cf demonstration 14).

[87] B omits "in our liberty"

second death, not remembering the one who searches [their] consciences. There is also the one who confesses his wrongdoing but is not given repentance. O steward of Christ: give repentance to your companion, and remember that your Lord did not reject those who had repented! Weeds are sown in the field, but the lord of the grain does not allow his servants to remove the weeds from among the wheat until the time of the harvest.[88] The net is stretched out in the sea, but the fish are not gathered until the net comes to the surface.[89] Servants receive money from their master, but the wretched servant is judged by his master.[90] Wheat and straw are mixed together, but the master of the threshing floor will discern and separate [them].[91] Many are invited to the wedding feast, but the Lord casts into darkness the one who has no wedding garments.[92] The wise and the foolish [virgins] stand together, but the Lord of the bridal chamber knows those who have brought [oil for their lamps].[93]

26. O shepherds, disciples of our Lord, tend the flock and lead [them] well. Strengthen the weak and uphold those who are bruised, bind up the broken, heal the lame, and guard those who are healthy for the Lord of the flock.[94] Do not be like the ignorant and foolish shepherd who, in his foolishness, is unable to tend the sheep, and whose arm is withered and whose eyes are blind,[95] for he says, *"Let the one that is dying die, and let the one that is lost remain lost, and let the one that remains eat the flesh of its companions."* [96] But when the Leader of the Shepherds comes, he will condemn the ignorant and foolish shepherd who did not provide well for his companions. But

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[88] Matthew 13:24-30
[89] Matthew 13:47-50
[90] Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27
[91] Luke 3:17
[92] Matthew 22:1-14
[93] Matthew 25:1-13
[94] Ezekiel 34:3-5
[95] Zechariah 11:17
[96] Zechariah 11:9

the one who tends the flock and leads it well and who brings the flock intact to the shepherd is called a good and useful servant. O watchmen, keep watch diligently and warn all the people about the destruction [to come], lest it come and take the[ir] soul[s]. For the blood of the soul that is taken in its sins will be on your hands. But if a soul is taken after being warned, that soul is taken in its sins and you are no longer accountable for it. You sheep who are healthy, do not gore those who are sick, lest you are condemned by our Great Shepherd when he comes.

27. Be convinced my friend, that [you] should draw near to those who repent and warn the righteous. This is the age of grace, and until it is complete, the possibility of repentance exists. The time draws near when grace will disappear, and justice will rule. There will no longer be repentance in that time, and justice will dwell in peace, for by its strength grace will have prevailed. When the time of justice comes, grace will not desire to receive the penitent. For a limit has been set for [grace]: the end [of the world]. After that, there is no longer any repentance. Read, my friend, and learn and know and see that concerning this every person is in need to one degree or another. For many run the race, but only the man who wins obtains the crown, and every person receives their wage according to their labour.

The demonstration on the penitent is completed.

DEMONSTRATION 8: *ON THE DEAD COMING TO LIFE*

I. CONTENTS

1 a statement of the problem: the nature of the resurrection
2 those who have died become "nothing"; like planted seeds, they will emerge with new bodies
3 heavenly bodies will be bestowed only at the resurrection
4-5 further exegesis of Paul: the bodies of the righteous will be transformed; the non-righteous will remain earthly
6 if God created Adam from nothing, it is easy for him to cause the earth to bring forth the dead
7-14 biblical testimony to the resurrection
- 7-9 the importance of being resurrected with one's ancestors and family
  - 7 Jacob's request: his bones should rest with those of his ancestors, not in Egypt
  - 8 Joseph's bones also taken from Egypt; Moses absolves Reuben's sin so that he could be resurrected with his brothers
  - 9 Moses' sorrow at not being buried with his ancestors and God's reasons for this
- 10 clear statements that the dead will rise: Moses, Hannah, Isaiah, David
- 11 events from the lives of Elijah and Elisha proving the resurrection of the dead
- 12 Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones
- 13 Ezekiel, Elijah, and Elisha raised the dead with two words; Christ will raise with one
- 14 in his first coming, Christ raised three dead persons, each time with two words

15 the dead will rise by one word of God, sent forth though Christ, who is God's utterance
16 Christ vs. the Sadducees: the resurrected righteous do not marry
17-18 sinners who live are dead to God, while the righteous who die are alive to God (they are merely sleeping)
19 the death-sleep of the wicked is disturbing and seems long, while that of the righteous is pleasant and seems short
20 reward and punishment only given when the dead awake; justice and not grace will prevail
21-22 N.T. proofs that reward and punishment will only be given at the end; all the righteous are brought to perfection together
23 it is only the Holy Spirit which departs from the bodies of the righteous to be with the Lord
24 the heretics are wrong in thinking that no earthly body ascends to heaven
25 closing statement: God causes to die, but also causes to live

II. TRANSLATION

1. Controversies always develop on these [questions]: *"How will the dead arise? With what body will they come?"* [1] For the body wastes away and decomposes, and as time lengthens the bones too are reduced to powder and become unrecognizable. If you enter a tomb where one hundred of the dead have been buried, you will not find [even] a handful of dust there. Those who reflect on these things say: 'We know that the dead will rise, but they will be clothed in heavenly bodies and spiritual forms. If this is not the case, [what should we say about] these hundred bodies buried in a single tomb, in which there is nothing at all after much time has elapsed? When the dead come to life and are clothed in bodies and rise up, from where will those bodies come, if they are not clothed in heavenly bodies? For there is nothing in the tomb.'

2. Whoever thinks these things is foolish and without knowledge. When the dead were brought into the tomb, they were some-

[1] 1Corinthians 15:35

thing, but after being [there] for a long time, they became nothing. But when the time comes for the dead to rise up, that nothing will become something, according to its former nature, but a change will be added to its nature. O stubborn man who thinks these things, hear what the blessed apostle said when he tried to persuade the fool like you. He said, *"Fool! Unless it dies, the seed that you sow will not live. What you plant does not resemble what emerges as a stem, but [is] a single, unadorned seed of wheat or barley or some other small grain. Each one of [these] small grains is given its own body, and God will clothe your seed with its body as he sees fit."* [2]

3. Be persuaded, therefore, you foolish man, by the fact that each one of these small grains clothes itself in a body of its own. You have never sown wheat and [then] harvested barley, nor have you ever planted a vine in which figs have grown. Rather, everything grows according to its nature. Thus, the body that was laid in the earth is what will rise up. With respect to [the fact] that the body decomposes and wastes away, you should be convinced by the parable of the seed. The seed decays and decomposes when it falls into the ground, but from this decay it sprouts, brings forth [leaves], and produces fruit. Ploughed land upon which no seed has fallen produces no fruit, even if that land drinks up all the rain. Likewise, when the dead come to life, no people will come forth from the tomb in which the dead have not been buried, even if the full sound of the trumpet resounds within it. If, as they say, the spirits of the upright ascend to heaven and put on heavenly bodies,[3] then they are in heaven, just as the one who raises the dead dwells in heaven. But when our Lifegiver comes, who will he raise up from the earth? Why did he write for us, *"The hour is coming, and is now, that the dead will also hear the voice of the Son of Man, and they will live and emerge from their tombs."* [4] For the heavenly body will enter the tomb and then come out from it again.

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[2] 1Corinthians 15:36-38

[3] A adds ܗܐ ܬܪܝܗܘܢ ܟܝܢܐ ("take note of the two natures"), but it is not clear how this fits into the sytax of the sentence.

[4] John 5:25-29

4. Those who are stubborn speak as follows: 'Why did the apostle say that the body which is in heaven is different than that which is on earth?'[5] But whoever hears this [question] should also listen to that other statement that the apostle made: *"There is an animal body, and there is a spiritual body."* [6] He also said, *"We will all sleep, but we will not all be changed."* [7] Again he said, *"That which dies will clothe itself with that which does not die, and that which decomposes will clothe itself with that which does not decompose."* [8] He also said, *"All of us must stand before the judgement seat of Christ, and each person will be rewarded in his body for whatever was done previously, whether good or evil."* [9] He also said, *"What will they do, those who are baptized for the dead? For if the dead do not rise, why are they baptized for them?"* [10] Again, he said, *"If the dead do not come to life, then neither did Christ rise up, and if Christ did not rise up, then your faith and our preaching is empty. If this is so, [then] we are false witnesses who have testified concerning God that he raised up Christ when he did not.*[11] *So then, if the dead do not rise up, there is no judgement. And if there is no judgement, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we will die. Do not be deceived! Evil talk corrupts gentle thoughts."* [12] You should understand what the apostle said (namely, that the heavenly body is different than the earthly body) as follows: when the body of the upright rises up and is changed it is called 'heavenly', while [the body] that does not change is called according to its earthly nature.

5. Listen, my friend, to a saying like this that the apostle also spoke. He said, *"The spiritual person judges everything, but he [himself] is not judged by anyone."* [13] He also said, *"Those who are spiritual contemplate the things of the spirit, but those who are carnal contemplate the things of the*

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[5] 1Corinthians 15:40
[6] 1Corinthians 15:44
[7] 1Corinthians 15:51
[8] 1Corinthains 15:53
[9] 2Corinthians 5:10
[10] 1Corinthians 15:29
[11] 1Corinthians 15:15
[12] 1Corinthians 15:32-33
[13] 1Corinthians 2:15

flesh." [14] Again he said, *"When we were carnal, the sicknesses of [our] sins were at work in the members of our bodies, so that we might become fruit for death."* [15] He also said, *"If the Spirit of Christ is in you, you are spiritual."* [16] The apostle said all these things while he was clothed in flesh but doing the works of the Spirit. Likewise, when the dead come to life, the righteous will be transformed, and the earthly form will be swallowed up by the heavenly, and it will be called a heavenly body. That which will not be changed, however, will be called earthly.

6. I will explain this coming to life of the dead, my friend, as I am able. In the beginning, God created Adam. He formed him from the dust and raised him up. If, when Adam did not exist, [God] made him from nothing, how much easier will it be for him now to raise him up, he who was sown as a seed in the earth! If God did things that were easy for us, his actions would not seem great to us. There are human craftsmen who create wonderful things, and those who are not the creators of [these] objects stand and wonder how [such things] can be. The work of their companions [seems] difficult in their eyes. How much more, [then], should the works of God [be considered] marvels! For God, [making] the dead come to life is no great [feat]. When no seed had been sown in the earth, the earth gave birth to what had not been thrown into it, and without conceiving gave birth in its virginity. Why should it be difficult, [then], for the earth to grow again what has been thrown into it, and to give birth after conception? Take note that her birth pains are at hand, as Isaiah said, *"Who has seen anything like this, and who has heard things like these? The earth labours for a single day, and a people is born in a single hour."* [17] For Adam was not sown, yet he came forth, and was born without conception. His offspring, however, have been sown; they wait for the rain and will come forth.

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[14] Romans 8:5
[15] Romans 7:5
[16] Romans 8:9
[17] Isaiah 66:8

Observe that many are being conceived in the earth, and the time of her birthing is at hand.

7. All of our fathers were looking for and hastening toward the hope of the resurrection and the dead coming to life. As the blessed apostle said, *"If the righteous had been looking for that city from which Abraham came forth, there was time for them to turn back again and go to it. They showed, however, that they were looking for a better [city], one which is in heaven."* [18] They were expecting to be set free and to go quickly to it. Understand and see, from what I am writing to you, that they were waiting for the resurrection. When he was dying, our father Jacob bound his son Joseph with an oath and said to him, *"Bury me in the tomb of my ancestors, with Abraham and Sarah and Isaac and Rebecca."* [19] Why, my friend, did Jacob not wish to be buried in Egypt, but with his ancestors? He was showing in advance that he would be waiting for the dead to come to life. When the shout and the sound of the horn takes place, his resurrection will be near his ancestors. At the time of the resurrection, he will not be mingled with the wicked, who will return to Sheol and to torment.

8. In a similar way, Joseph bound his brothers with an oath and said to them, *"When God remembers you, take my bones with you from this place."* [20] His brothers acted according to the word of Joseph, and they kept the oath for one hundred and twenty-five years. When the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt, Moses took the bones of Joseph and left.[21] The bones of [that] righteous man were more precious and valuable to him than the gold and silver that the Israelites took from the Egyptians when they plundered them. The bones of Joseph were in the wilderness for forty years, and when Moses was dying he gave them as an inheritance to Joshua son of Nun. For the bones of Joseph his ancestor were more valuable to him than all the plunder of that land that he sub-

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[18] Hebrews 11:15-16
[19] Genesis 49:29-31
[20] Genesis 50:25
[21] Exodus 13:19

dued. Why did Moses give the bones of Joseph to Joshua? It was because he was from the tribe of Ephraem, the son of Joseph. He buried them in the land of promise so that there might be a treasure in that land (namely, the bones of Joseph buried in it).[22] Furthermore, when Jacob was dying, he blessed his tribes and showed them what would happen to them in the last days. He said to Reuben, *"Reuben, you are my firstborn, my strength and the beginning of my might. You have gone astray: like water, you will not remain, since you went up to the sleeping quarters of your father. It is a fact that you went up and defiled my bed."* [23] From the time that Jacob died to the time that Moses died, two hundred and thirty-three years passed. Then Moses, in his role as priest, wanted to absolve Reuben, who had gone astray and sinned when he slept with Bilhah, his father's concubine. [This was done] so that when his brothers were resurrected, he would be numbered among them. For he said at the beginning of his blessing, *"May Reuben live and not die, and may he be included in the census."* [24]

9. When the time came for Moses to sleep with his ancestors, he was distressed and sorrowful. He petitioned his lord and longed to pass over to the promised land. Why, my friend, was Moses, a righteous man, sorrowful because he did not enter the promised land? It was because [he wanted] to go and be buried with his ancestors and not in the land of his enemies, the land of Moab. The Moabites had hired Baalam son of Beor to curse Israel. It was for this reason that Moses wanted to be buried in that land: [he did not want] the Moabites to come and take vengeance on him, uncovering the bones of a righteous man and throwing them away. His Lord was good to Moses, and took him up Mount Nebo and showed him the whole land, making it pass before him.[25] Moses saw the whole land, and saw the mountain of the Jebusites where the Shekinah would dwell. When he saw the tomb in Hebron where his ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were buried, he was

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[22] Joshua 24:32
[23] Genesis 49:3-4
[24] Deuteronomy 33:6
[25] Deuteronomy 34:1-4

sorrowful and wept, since he would not be buried with them and his bones would not be placed with their bones, and at the resurrection he would not rise with them. But when he had seen the whole land, his Lord encouraged him by saying to him, 'I myself will bury and hide you, and no one will know [where] your tomb [is].' And Moses died according to the word of the mouth of the Lord, and he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab across from Beth Peor, where Israel sinned. To this day, no one knows [where] his tomb [is].[26] In the case of Moses, his Lord did two excellent things by not making his tomb know to the Israelites. In the first place, his enemies would not know [where it was] and would not [be able to] throw his bones from the tomb. And secondly, his own people would not know [where it was] and would not [be able to] make his tomb into a place of worship. For Moses was considered to be like God in the eyes of his people.[27] Gain insight from this, my friend: when [Moses] left them and went up the mountain, they said, *"We do not know what has happened to this Moses,*[28] *who brought us out of the land of Egypt."* [29] So they made a calf for themselves and worshipped it, and they forgot the God who had brought them up from Egypt through Moses with a mighty hand and an uplifted arm.[30] For this reason, God respected Moses and did not make his tomb known, for if the tomb was made known, his people might go astray and make an image for themselves, and worship it and sacrifice to it. In their sins, they would disturb the bones of [that] righteous man.

10. Again, Moses clearly announced the resurrection of the dead, for he said, as from the mouth of his God, *"I cause to die, and I cause to live."* [31] Hannah, also, spoke as follows in her prayer: *"The Lord*

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[26] Deuteronomy 34:5-6
[27] Cf. Exodus 7:1
[28] A: "this man Moses"
[29] Exodus 32:1
[30] Deuteronomy 5:15; Psalm 106:19-21
[31] Deuteronomy 32:39

causes to die and causes to live; he brings down to Sheol and raises up." [32] Furthermore, the prophet Isaiah said, *"Your dead will live, Lord,*[33] *and their corpses will rise up; those who sleep in the dust will wake up and praise [you]."* [34] David, too, proclaimed, *"You do wonders for the dead; the mighty will rise up and acknowledge you, and those in tombs will recount your goodness."* [35] How will those in tombs recount the goodness of God? When they hear the sound of the trumpet that calls [them], and the horn that shouts from on high, and when the earthquake takes place and the tombs are opened, the mighty will rise up in glory in [their] tombs and recount to each other and say, 'Great is the goodness that has been done for us! Our hope was cut off, yet hope came to us.[36] We were imprisoned in darkness, yet we have come into the light.[37] We were sown in corruption, yet we rise in glory. We were buried in a natural way, yet we rise in a spiritual way. We were sown in weakness, yet we rise in strength.' [38] This is the goodness that they will recount in the tombs.

11. It was not only in words, my friend, that God said 'I make the dead live', but he also showed us through actions, through many testimonies, so that there would be no doubt in [our] minds. He has shown [this] in the past clearly, for through Elijah a wonder was seen: the dead will live and those who sleep in the dust will rise up. For when the son of the widow died, Elijah brought him back to life and gave him to his mother.[39] And Elisha, his disciple, gave life to the son of the Shunammite woman,[40] so that the testimony of two [witnesses] might be established and stand firm for us. Furthermore, the Israelites threw a dead man onto the bones of Elisha,

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[32] 1Samuel 2:6
[33] A: "Adonai" instead of "Lord"
[34] Isaiah 26:19
[35] Psalm 88:10-11
[36] Cf. Ezekiel 37:11
[37] A: "the light of our Lord"
[38] Cf. 1Corinthians 15:42-44
[39] 1Kings 17:17-24
[40] 2Kings 4:8-37

and the dead man came to life and rose up.[41] Thus the testimony of three [witnesses] stands firm.

12. The resurrection of the dead was also seen clearly through Ezekiel the prophet, when God brought him down to the valley and showed him many bones.[42] He led him all around them, and said to him, *"Will these bones live, O human?"* And Ezekiel said to him, *"You know, O Lord of lords."* And the Lord said to him, *"Prophesy over these bones, O human! Prophesy*[43] *and say to [these] dry bones, 'Hear the word of the Lord of lords.'"* When he made them hear these words, there was a disturbance and a noise, and the bones came together, even those that had been reduced to powder or broken. The prophet saw them and was astonished. For they came [together] from every region, and [each] bone received its companion. Each joint drew near to its fellow-joint and they fastened themselves together, one to the other. Their dryness became moist, and the joints were joined together with ligaments.[44] Blood bubbled up in the blood vessels, skin was spread over the flesh, and hair grew according to its nature. [The corpses] were lying [there] and no spirit was in them. Then [God] commanded the prophet and to him, *"Prophesy to the spirit and say to it, 'O spirit, come from the four winds and breathe on these people who have been killed and make them live!"* And when he had made them hear [this] other word, the spirit entered into them, and they came to life and stood up on their feet, a very great multitude.

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[41] 2Kings 13:21

[42] Ezekiel 37:1-14

[43] Since the perfect and imperative forms are identical in the case of both "prophesy" and "say", this line could be translated "he prophesied and said". Manuscript A reads the line this way, even adding a subject: "the human prophesied and said".

[44] Syr. ܓܝܕܐ . The term can also mean "nerves". A has an alternate reading for the verb here: ܐܬܪܦܦ instead of ܐܬܠܦܦ. This could yield the translation "and the joints fluttered with nerves".

13. But why, my friend, did those bodies not rise through a single word from Ezekiel, so that the resurrection of [both] bones and spirit was brought about? Notice that through one word the bones were joined together, and through another the spirit came. This was so that perfection might be left for our Lord Jesus Christ, who with one shout and one word will make every human body[45] rise up in the end. [In the case of Ezekiel], the word itself was not defective, but its bearer was weak. Understand and gain insight also through this: when Elijah, and Elisha his disciple, brought the dead to life, it was not through a single word that they raised them. Rather, they prayed and made intercession and waited for some time, and then [the dead] rose up.

14. Our Lord, in his first coming, made three dead people come to life, so that a triple testimony might be established. He raised up each one of them with only two words. When he brought to life the widow's son, he called him two times, as he said to him, *"Young man! Young man! Rise up!"*[46] And he came to life and stood up. He also called twice to the daughter of the synagogue ruler, when he said to her, *"Young girl! Young girl! Rise up!"*[47] Her spirit [then] returned and she stood up. And when Lazarus died, [Christ] came to the place of burial, prayed earnestly, and called out in a loud voice, *"Lazarus! Come out!"*[48] And [Lazarus] came to life and came out of his tomb.

15. All that I have been trying to convince you of is this: that each of these dead people rose up through two words. For there will be two resurrections in them: that was one resurrection, but the second is still to come. In that resurrection when all people rise up, they will not fall again. By one word of God, sent forth through his

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[45] Syr. ܟܠܗ ܓܫܡܐ ܕܐܕܡ ; literally: "the whole body of Adam". A has "all those who have been born of Adam".

[46] Luke 7:14

[47] Mark 5:41

[48] John 11:43

Christ,[49] all the dead will rise up quickly, in the blink of an eye, since the one who bears [this word] is neither weak nor defective. For by a single word that he will shout, he will make all the ends [of the earth] hear, and all those lying [in the earth] will leap up and arise. And [this] word will not return empty to the one who sent it, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet. He compared the word to the rain and the snow, for he said, *"Just as the rain and the snow fall from the sky and do not return, but rather cause the earth to grow and produce [vegetation], giving seed to the sower and bread for food, so also the word that goes out from my mouth will not return to me empty, but will do what I desire and accomplish that for which I sent it."* [50] The rain and the snow do not return to the sky, but fulfill the wishes of the one who sent them to the earth. And the word that [God] will send through Christ, who is his utterance and word, will return to him with a great host. For when he comes and brings [the word], it will fall like the rain and the snow, and through it all that has been sown will grow and bear righteous fruit. The word will return to its sender, but it will not go back empty. Rather, it will speak as follows before its sender: 'It is I, with the children that the Lord has given me!'[51] It is this voice through which the dead will live. Our saviour testifies concerning it when he says, *"The hour is coming when the dead will also hear the voice of the Son of Man and come out from their tombs."* [52] As it is written, *"In the beginning was the voice, which is the Word."* [53] Again it says, *"The Word became a body and lived among us."* [54] It is this voice of God that will shout from on high and cause all the dead to rise up.

16. Our Lord explained to the Sadducees the coming to life of the dead when they brought him the story of the woman who had been with seven husbands. They said to him, *"The woman belonged to all of them. When the dead come to life, to which one of them will she belong?"* Then

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[49] A: "through Jesus, his Christ"
[50] Isaiah 55:10-11
[51] Cf. Isaiah 8:18; John 17:12
[52] John 5:25.
[53] John 1:1
[54] John 1:14

our Lord said to them, *"You are greatly in error, and you do not understand the scriptures or the power of God. For those among the dead who are worthy of that world and that resurrection do not take wives, [if they are] men, nor do the women belong to husbands. They cannot die, since they are like the angels of God, [and are] children of the resurrection. With respect to the resurrection, when the dead will rise, have you not read in the scripture[s] that God said to Moses from the bush, 'I am the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob.' He is not the God of the dead, since all [people] are alive for him."* [55]

17. There are also those who, though living, are dead to God. He imposed a commandment on Adam, and said to him, *"On the day that you eat from the tree, you will certainly die."* [56] After he had eaten and transgressed the commandment,[57] he lived for nine hundred and thirty years, but God considered him to be dead because of his sins. In order to verify for you that the sinner is called 'dead' even while alive, I will give you an explanation. For it is written in Ezekiel the prophet, *"I live, says the Lord of lords, [and] I take no pleasure in the death of the dead sinner."*

18. Furthermore, our Lord spoke to that man who said to him, *"I am going to bury my father, and [then] I will come to you."* Our Lord said to him, *"Let the dead bury their dead, but you go and announce the kingdom of God."* [58] How do you understand this saying, my friend? Have you ever seen the dead burying their dead? How can a dead person rise up to bury a dead person? Accept this explanation from me: a sinner, while living, is dead to God, and an upright [person], though dead, is alive to God. For this death is sleep, as David said, *"I lay down and slept, and I awoke."* [59] Isaiah also said, *"Those who lie in*

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[55] Matthew 22:28-32. Cf. Luke 20:35-38. A: "He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

[56] Genesis 2:17

[57] A: "After he had transgressed the commandment that had been imposed on him"

[58] Matthew 8:20; Luke 9:59-60

[59] Psalm 3:5

the dust will awake." [60] And our Lord said about the daughter of the synagogue ruler, *"The girl is not dead, but is in fact sleeping."* [61] And about Lazarus he said to his disciples, *"Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to wake him up."* [62] And the apostle said, *"We will all sleep, but we will not all be changed."* [63] He also said, *"Do not be distressed about those who have fallen asleep."* [64]

19. It is right for us, however, to be afraid of the second death, which is full of weeping and the gnashing of teeth, of groans and miseries, [and] is situated in the outer darkness. But blessed are the faithful and the upright in that resurrection, those who expect to be awakened and to receive [the fulfillment of] the good promises [made to] them. Because of what is reserved for them, [there will be] woe for the wicked, who do not believe in the resurrection. It would be better for them if they did not rise up, just as they believe. While he is sleeping, the servant for whom his master is preparing punishments and fetters does not want to wake up, since he knows that when the morning comes and he wakes up his master will punish and bind him. But the good servant, to whom his master has promised gifts, waits for the coming of the morning so that he might receive presents from his master. Even though he is truly sleeping, he sees in his dream how his master would give to him what he had promised him; he rejoices in his dream, and is exultant and gladdened. The sleep of the wicked person, however, is not pleasant for him. He thinks that the morning has arrived, and his heart is broken in his dream.[65] In contrast, the upright lie down and their sleep is pleasant for them, during [both] the day and the night. For the whole night, they do not perceive it to be [a] long [time], but experience it[66] as a single moment. Then, with the coming of

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[60] Isaiah 26:19
[61] Matthew 9:24
[62] John 11:11
[63] 1Corinthians 15:51
[64] 1Thessalonians 4:13
[65] A adds: "by the threat of his master"
[66] Syr. ܚܫܝܒ ܒܥܝܢܝܗܘܢ . Literally: "it is reckoned by their eyes"

the morning, they wake up and rejoice. The sleep of the wicked, however, lies [heavily] upon them, like a man lying [sick] with a strong and deep fever who turns to and fro on his bed, and who is disturbed for the whole of the long night. They[67] fear the morning, when their master will condemn them.

20. Our faith shows that when people lie down [in death], they experience this sleep without knowing good from evil. The upright do not receive [the fulfillment of] their promises, nor do the wicked receive punishment, until the judge comes and distinguishes between [those on his] right and [those on his] left.[68] Be persuaded by what is written: when the judge sits and the books are opened before him and the good and wicked are summoned, those who have performed good [deeds] will receive good things from the One who is good, but those who have done evil [deeds] will receive evil things from the just judge. His nature does not change for those who are good, and he is just because he justly condemns many, but for those who are evil, his nature does change. In that world, grace is consumed by justice, and there is justice for everyone. Grace will not be joined with justice for them, just as grace does not assist injury, nor justice grace. For grace is far from the judge, and it is justice that animates him. If grace draws near to anyone, let that person turn toward it, and it will not deliver him into the hand[s] of justice. Otherwise, [justice] will condemn him when it demands [an explanation] of his faults.[69] If grace is far from a person, justice will bring him to trial, and by it he will be condemned and go to torment.

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[67] Syr. has the singular here, though the subject seems to be the plural "wicked", rather than the man with the fever.

[68] Matthew 25:32-46

[69] An alternate translation might be: "when it demands [payment] for his mistakes".

21. Listen, my friend, to this proof that reward and punishment[70] will [only] take place at the end. For when the shepherd divides his flock and places some on his right and some on his left, he will [first] receive the grace of those who are good, and then give them the kingdom as an inheritance. Likewise, he will [first] rebuke those who are evil and condemn them, and then he will send them away to torment. As for those who sent messengers after the king and said, *"This [man] will not be king over us!"*,[71] [it is only] after he returns and receives the kingdom [that] his enemies will be killed before him. The workers who expend energy and labour in the vineyard will not receive their pay until the toil is over.[72] [It is only] when the master of the money comes [that] he will exact interest from the merchants who had received money. Until they hear the shout, the virgins[73] who wait for the Bridegroom slumber and sleep when he delays his arrival; then they wake up and prepare their lamps. The wise [virgins] will go in, but the foolish ones will be left outside.[74] But those who have gone before us in faith will not be perfected without us.

22. From all these things, my friend, understand and be certain that no person has yet received his reward or punishment. The righteous have not inherited the kingdom, nor have the evil gone to torment. The shepherd has not yet divided his flock. Notice that the workers labour in the vineyard, but have not yet received payment. The merchants [continue to] deal with money, and their master has not yet come to settle accounts. The King has gone [away] to receive the kingdom, but has not yet returned a second time. Those virgins[75] who are waiting for the Bridegroom [continue] to sleep right up to the present; they are waiting for the shout, and

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[70] Syr. has only one word, ܦܘܪܥܢܐ , whose meaning encompasses both reward and punishment.

[71] Luke 19:14-27

[72] Matthew 20:1-16

[73] The term is feminine.

[74] Matthew 25:1-13

[75] The term is feminine.

[then] they will wake up. And those who have gone before and laboured in the faith will not be perfected until the last ones arrive.

23. Those with childish minds say, 'If no one has received a reward, why did the apostle say, "When we depart from the body, we will be with the Lord."' [76] But remember, my friend, that I have [already] explained this topic to you in [my] demonstration on the single ones.[77] The Spirit that the righteous receive goes to our Lord, in keeping with its heavenly nature, until the time of the resurrection, when it comes to clothe itself with the body that it lived in. It remembers [this body] before God at all times, and presses for the resurrection of that body in which it lived, as Isaiah the prophet said about the Church which is from the peoples: *"Those who remember you before the Lord will persevere and stand firm, and you will not grant them quietness."* [78] But there is no one to remember the wicked before the Lord, since the Holy Spirit is far from them: they are natural, and are buried in a natural way.

24. The schools [that are] instruments of the Evil One take exception to the word that our Lord spoke: *"No one has ascended to heaven except the one who has descended from heaven: the Son of Man, who was in heaven."* [79] They say, 'Look! Our Lord testified that an earthly body does not ascend to heaven!' Those who are ignorant do not understand the meaning of this saying. For when our Lord taught Nicodemus, he did not understand the meaning of [his] word[s]. Then our Lord said to him, *"No one has ascended into heaven and come [back] down in order to talk to you [about] what is there. If I speak to you about things that are earthly and you do not believe, how will you believe if I speak to you about things that are heavenly?* Besides me, no other witness from there has come down in order to testify to heavenly things so that you might believe. For Elijah ascended there, but he did not de-

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[76] 2Corinthians 5:8
[77] See 6.14, 18. A has: "the single ones, the covenanters".
[78] Isaiah 62:6-7
[79] John 3:13

scend in order to testify with me.[80] Yet the testimony of two is trustworthy."

25. As for you, my friend, have no doubt about the dead coming to life, for the living mouth of God testifies: *"I cause to die, and I cause to live."* [81] Both of these come out of one mouth.[82] Just as it is certain for us that he causes to die, and we see it, so also it is certain and worthy of belief that he causes to live. Receive what I have explained to you, and believe that on the day of resurrection your body will rise up in its entirety. You will receive the reward for your faith from your Lord, and will rejoice and take delight in all that you have believed.

The demonstration on the dead coming to life is completed.

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[80] A: "he did not descend with me"
[81] Deuteronomy 32:39
[82] A omits "Both of these come out of one mouth."

DEMONSTRATION 9: *ON HUMILITY*

I. CONTENTS

1 introduction: the value of humility
2 qualities of the humble person
3 humility overcomes anger, jealousy, and pride: O.T. examples
4 more qualities of the humble person
5 the humble are at peace with everyone; the example of Mary the mother of Jesus
6 magnificence belongs to Christ, humility to the Church
7 humility and pride: polar opposites
8 punishment for the jealous: O.T. examples
9-10 Christ lives in the humble, but jealousy and anger invite the Evil One
11-12 a tree is known by its fruit: speech indicates character
13 qualities of the humble person: O.T. examples
14 loving our natural condition: humility is righteousness

II. TRANSLATION

1. Humility is excellent at all times; it delivers from every calamity those who draw near to it, and its fruits are many. Humility gives birth to many virtues. Integrity[1] comes forth from it. Noah found favour through it, and it saved him, for it is written that God said to him, *"I have noticed that you are righteous and innocent among this generation."* [2] There are many testimonies to [the value of] humility,

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[1] Syr. ܫܠܡܘܬܐ . The word "innocent" (ܫܠܡ) in the quotation that follows is based on the same root.

[2] Genesis 7:1

for it says in scripture,*"The humble will inherit the earth and dwell on it forever."* [3] Again, Isaiah the prophet said, *"Whom will I regard and in whom will I dwell, if not with the meek and humble [person] who trembles at my word?"* [4] Again, it says, *"The one with a humble spirit and downcast eyes is better than the one who conquers a city."* [5] Again, [scripture] speaks as follows: *"The righteousness of the innocent*[6] *one goes before him."* [7] Concerning Moses, that faithful man, it is written, *"He was humble before all people on the face of the earth."* [8]

2. Humility is evidence for the excellence of the fear of God, and those who love humility possess many gifts on account of it. If you are looking for mercy, it is found in the humble. Humility is the dwelling place of righteousness. Instruction is found with the humble, and their lips pour forth knowledge. Humility brings forth wisdom and understanding, and the humble attain moderation. If you are looking for patience and temperance, they are found in the one who is humble. The ascetic life is attractive and desirable to them. The word of the humble one is sweet, and his face is radiant; he laughs and rejoices. Love is beautiful to the humble, for by it they know how to conduct themselves. The humble[9] abstain from all evil, and their faces shine with the goodness of their hearts. The humble one speaks, and it is fitting for him to do so; his lips laugh but his voice is not heard. The humble one fears strife, since it gives birth to jealousy. When he hears heated words, the humble one plugs his ears lest they enter into his heart. The mind of the humble one brings forth all that is good, and the senses of his mind meditate on what is beautiful. The humble one drinks[10] instruction like water, and it enters into him like oil into his veins. The humble

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[3] Psalm 37:11, 29; Matthew 5:4
[4] Isaiah 66:2
[5] Proverbs 16:19, 32
[6] A: "humble"
[7] Proverbs 11:5
[8] Numbers 12:3
[9] A: "the humble and the modest"
[10] B: "asks for" (ܫܐܠ instead of ܪܥܐ)

one humbles himself, but his heart rises to the highest height; his mind meditates on the place where his treasure lies. The eyes of his physical sight behold the earth, but the eyes of his intelligence behold the highest height. At each moment, the humble one is afraid of speaking a word of accusation against a person. The humble one reflects on the Law of his Lord, and from it[11] receives the remedy[12] which he seeks. The humble one rejoices over the prosperity of his companion, and he treats his friend as he would himself. The humble one associates with the proud and the haughty, but he takes captive and controls his whole intelligence. Humility pulls down strongholds and overcomes passion and enmity.

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[11] Or "him". In either case the meaning is the same: awareness of the remedy comes through the Law.

[12] The first eight occurrences (in the *Demonstrations*) of the Syriac word for "remedy" (ܐܣܝܐ) are found in demonstration seven, and refer to repentance as a remedy for sin which is administered either by 'wise doctors' or the transgressor himself. Section eight of the present demonstration speaks of "silence and humility" as a remedy for jealousy. In demonstration fourteen, Aphrahat describes the ideal leader of the Church as a "wise doctor who has obtained remedies" (14.16). Likewise, it is only the "wise doctor" who is able to remove the claws of the Evil One from the heart of the believer who has allowed jealously a foothold. A few lines later Aphrahat says that peace is the only remedy for wrath (which is caused by jealousy) (14.43). In 14.37 Aphrahat refers to the "headstrong and wicked men" who have corrupted the Church as "the poison [ܐܣܝܐ] of death". Conversely, Christ is referred to as the "poison" which has killed Death (22.4-5). The only other occurrences of ܐܣܝܐ are in demonstration twenty-three. In 23.8 we are reminded that it is not the righteous (who are "healthy") who need "medicine", but sinners (who are "sick"). And in 23.52 the spirit of Christ is referred to as the "remedy for our bodies", probably an allusion to resurrection. In the present verse, therefore, the humble one receives the sought-for remedy through the Law because the Law requires repentance for sin and provides teaching on how to deal with particular sins (such as jealousy). In this context, "Law" seems to refer to the teaching of Christ.

3. The humility of Jacob overcame the anger of Esau his brother and the four hundred men with him.[13] The humility of Joseph overcame the anger of his brothers[14] who were jealous of him and hated him. Through his humility, Moses overcame and humbled all the pride of Pharoah.[15] The humility of David overcame the pride of Goliath, who threatened him angrily.[16] The humility of Hezekiah overcame the entire assault[17] of Sennacherib, who threatened and blasphemed.[18] The humility of Mordecai overcame all of the boastfulness of Haman.[19] By their humility, Daniel and his companions overcame the wicked men who slandered them.[20]

4. The humble keep themselves from envy, jealousy, and strife. Pride is abominable in their eyes, and they do not participate in violence. They keep falsehood away from themselves, and they are strangers to slander. They cast out and reject enmity, since they are peacemakers. They cast out and reject pride from among themselves, so as to maintain a good name. Contentiousness they do not know, since they love simplicity and righteousness. They are quiet and gentle, and they wait for the Bridegroom. They are strangers to the whole world; contempt is far from them, and those who mock are detestable in their eyes. The inner chambers of their hearts are full of good treasures; they purify their consciences from deceit. The eyes of their intelligence contemplate what is above; they dwell on the beauty of their Lord[21] and rejoice at all times. Their hearts conceive all goodness, and their lips give birth to good fruits. They have received the good seed which is from their Lord, and they

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[13] Genesis 33:1-11
[14] Genesis 45:1-14
[15] Exodus 3:11
[16] 1Samuel 17:40-51
[17] A: "all the pride"
[18] Isaiah 36-37; 2Kings 18-19
[19] Esther 10:3
[20] Daniel 3
[21] Cf. Isaiah 33:17

seize and throw away[22] the wicked thistles from the seed. Their seed yields fruit a hundredfold, since it is watered by the spring of life. Humility is planted in the midst of them, and it causes the fruits of faith and love to grow. They wear Christ like a fine coat, which they keep from all defilement. The Spirit which they have received lives in them and is a friend to them; they do not grieve this Spirit. They adorn their temples for the Great King, who enters and lives in those who are quiet and humble. They set their buildings on the Rock of Truth, and they do not fear the waves or the winds. Their deeds shine like lamps,[23] and their light springs forth before them. They prepare a wedding gift for the Bridegroom[24] who is coming; they wait so that they might enter his bridal chamber. They receive money and make a profit from it, for they wish to obtain ten talents.[25] They repudiate and dissipate their wealth; they do not hold on to money or conceal it.[26] Their visible bodies walk on the earth, but all of their thoughts are on their Lord. They journey and walk on the straight and narrow path,[27] and they enter by the narrow gate of the kingdom. Their inclination compels them to keep the Law, upon which they meditate at all times. They think and live in the world as strangers, for the city that they wait for is in heaven.[28] Their minds have been captured by what is above and are set there, for they are waiting to enter the holy place. Their eyes are open and they gaze on that place and see the Bridegroom who is preparing himself. Their messengers go there every day, and carry and bring peace and good will.[29] Their names are written in the Book of Life,[30] and they pray and groan so

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[22] A: "pull up" (ܥܨܠܡ instead of ܥܕܡ)
[23] A: "like the sun"
[24] A: "the King"
[25] Matthew 25:20-21
[26] Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 21:33-34
[27] Matthew 7:13-14, Luke 13:24
[28] Hebrews 11:9-10
[29] Matthew 18:10
[30] Phillipians 4:3

that they might not be blotted out from it.[31] They send their gifts of fasting and prayer as a bribe[32] to him who has the power to inscribe and to blot out. And on their hearts they write the Law of their Lord, so that they will be inscribed in this eternal book. They blot out their sins each moment, lest their names be blotted out from the Book of Life. They love the calamities of their temporal existence, so that they might be far removed from eternal torment. Their tongues teach the songs of Christ, so that they might take delight in the place of his melodious and pleasant songs. They strive to look upon that place, and what they have need of remains to happen for them.

5. These are the ones who love humility: those whose peace with every person increases. The humble are children of the Most High and brothers of Christ, who, having been proclaimed for the sake of peace, came to us. On account of her humility, Mary received him, for when Gabriel brought the news to the blessed Mary he spoke as follows to her: *"Peace be to you, blessed among women."* [33] Gabriel had taken peace and brought the blessed fruit, and the beloved child was conceived within Mary. She glorified and magnified the Lord: *"He has delighted in the humility of his servant, but has taken no pleasure in those who are proud and important. The Most High lifts up all those who are humble."* [34] See, my friend, that peace runs to the humble.

6. When the teacher of humility was born, the watchers of heaven glorified him, saying, *"Peace in heaven, glory on the earth, and good news for human beings!"* [35] He taught humility when he came, saying, *"If someone hits you on your cheek, offer the other also. If someone forces*

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[31] Revelation 3:5?

[32] Syr. ܫܘܬܦܐ . The term is used elsewhere in 10.3, 14.3 (three times), 14.5, 14.39, and 22.7. Unlike the present example, in all of these other cases the term has a negative valency.

[33] Luke 1:28

[34] Luke 1:48, 51-52

[35] See Luke 2:10-14

you to go with him one mile, go with him two more. If someone wants to take your coat, give him your cloak as well." [36] The humble are able to do all these things that our Saviour taught. Pride and magnificence are not suitable for the humble, any more than a diadem on the head of the one who is poor. The humble man who is elevated is hated by his lord, and the poor man who places a diadem on his head is killed by the king. Magnificence and pride are the diadem of our magnificent King. For this reason, magnificence is fitting for him alone, since it belongs to him and is His royal banner. Pride[37] is also fitting to His nature, but is hateful and foul to the sons of the flesh. The signs and marks of the kingdom are appropriate for the king, but not for lesser men. For this reason, my friend, what God hates is among us, but what is loved by him is not found among us. What belongs to him will remain with him, and we will continue in our condition. Humility is appropriate for us; pride and magnificence are appropriate for him. He gives to us what belongs to us, [which is] humility,[38] and whatever He does not give to us we will not take. And even when He puts us under severe trial, He is testing us because the one who takes what does not belong to him is considered vicious and deceitful, but the one who remains in his humble condition the Most High elevates. Do not pursue magnificence.

7. *"No person can serve two masters."* [39] Pride does not associate with humility, nor splendour with modesty, nor audacity with moderation, nor recklessness with self-control. Whoever is proud now will be deprived of the world to come, but all who love humility will be lifted up and exalted in the place of magnificence. When the rich man, who was dressed in purple and was lifted up and exalted, and who boasted about himself, came to that place, he was overcome with anguish. But Lazarus, who humbled himself, was exalted and

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[36] Matthew 5:39-41; Luke 6:29

[37] A: "greatness". (ܪܒܘܬܐ instead of ܪܡܘܬܐ)

[38] A omits "He gives to us… humility".

[39] Matthew 6:24; Luke 6:13

remained in the bosom of Abraham.[40] The Pharisee and the tax collector were praying in the temple.[41] The Pharisee exalted and justified himself, but he went down to his house guilty. The tax collector, who humbled himself, went down to his house justified. Evil is set against good, darkness against light, enmity against righteousness, jealousy against humility, and contention against silence. Evil has no strength to stand before goodness, and darkness, when it sees the light, flees from it. Sweetness moderates the effect of bitterness, and humility overcomes enmity. Righteousness brings an end to jealousy, and silence extinguishes controversy. The darkness does not envy the gloom, nor is enmity jealous of contentiousness. Jealousy does not scoff at controversy, nor does bitterness hate wormwood. But the wicked are jealous of the good, and the impious envy the righteous. The proud boast about themselves before the humble, and liars scoff at those who tell the truth. The foolish treat the wise[42] with contempt, and those who do not have the truth do not wish that the righteous be found. To the one clothed in pride, the humble person seems like an executioner, and the one whose hands are entwined in evil does not take pleasure in the righteous person. In the eyes of the one whose mouth is full of deceit the truthful person is hateful and abominable.

8. There is no remedy for jealousy except silence and humility, and a terrible retribution results from jealousy. Because the serpent was jealous of Adam in paradise, three curses were placed on his head: [God] took away his feet and he went around on his belly; he took away his food and dust was given to him; he made him an enemy of humankind and that which is trampled by them.[43] Cain, who killed Abel out of jealousy, was cursed for seven generations,[44] and he roamed the earth and was restless.[45] Esau was jealous of his

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[40] Luke 16:19-26
[41] Luke 18:9-14
[42] A: "the humble"
[43] Genesis 3:14
[44] Genesis 4:24
[45] Genesis 4:14

brother Jacob and persecuted him. The humble Jacob received Esau's firstborn rights and his blessing;[46] the proud man became subject to the humble man. As for those who were jealous of the humble Joseph, it was Joseph who was exalted, and his enemies fell down and worshipped him.[47] Pharoah was jealous of the Hebrew people and issued a command that their children should perish in the sea. He was judged with the judgement he decreed and he received punishment for his sins.[48] Korah and his companions were jealous of Moses, and an evil end came upon them: Sheol opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and a fire blazed forth and consumed him.[49] Aaron and Miriam were jealous of the humble Moses; the Holy One manifested himself in order to destroy them, and Miriam became leprous for seven days.[50] Saul was jealous of the humble David and hated him; the Holy Spirit left [Saul] and a consuming spirit afflicted him.[51] Ahab was jealous of Naboth and killed him; at the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth they licked up his blood also.[52] Jezebel persecuted Elijah without being able to harm him; the dogs devoured her, and Elijah went up to heaven.[53] The slanderers who were jealous of the righteous men were themselves devoured by the flame of fire, while the righteous men were delivered from it.[54] The Chaldeans who slandered Daniel themselves filled up the pit which they had dug for him.[55] Haman, who was jealous of Mordecai and his people, did not achieve success with his command, but received death on the scaffold along with his sons.[56] The foolish people who did not receive the humble King Christ [God] uprooted from their place and

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[46] Genesis 27:36
[47] Genesis 42:6
[48] Exodus 14:5-31
[49] Numbers 16:1-33
[50] Numbers 12:1-15
[51] 1Samuel 16:14-23
[52] 1Kings 21:1-19
[53] 1Kings 21:23; 19:1-3; 2Kings 2:11
[54] Daniel 3:22ff.
[55] Daniel 6:17-25
[56] Esther 8:9-10

scattered abroad. When he receives the kingdom and returns, his enemies will be destroyed before him.[57] All these things that I have written to you I remind you of, my friend (and it is no burden for me to do so), so that you will be assured of this: that the wicked receive the evil to be placed on their heads from the hands of the humble.

9. For this reason, my friend, may it be firmly settled in your mind that the Evil One lives in each person who puts on jealousy, and that unclean spirit that lived in Saul lives in him also. When David played the harp for Saul in order to soothe him, Saul, who had put on jealousy, threw a spear at the one who was doing good to him.[58] The Restful and Humble[59] One lives in the person in whom humility is found, and he becomes a dwelling place for Christ. Call to mind what I have written to you above: those who are good do not envy those who are evil, but those who are evil envy those who are good. I have never seen a rich man who envies the poor, nor do the righteous envy the wicked. The just do not envy the lawless, nor do peacemakers seek commotion, nor do the truthful envy the deceitful. The trustworthy do not envy those who are corrupt, nor do the modest envy those who are insolent. Therefore, run after humility, which overcomes jealousy and removes controversy, and join silence and moderation to it, so that you might be free from great controversy. Love humility and possess modesty, and unite these two with moderation. Many people love those who are humble, but [as for] the proud, even the wicked (who are like them) hate them. Hate anger, and separate yourself from hateful blemishes. Do not open your mouth in anger, and do not allow your face to be filled with rage.[60] Do not make an exhibit out of your tongue, lest evil fruit be born from it. Let not the beginnings of anger be born in you, lest a multitude of thoughts be conceived from their children.

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[57] Luke 19:27
[58] 1Samuel 19:9-10
[59] A: "Gentle"
[60] Literally: "do not prepare your face with many colours".

10. When anger is conceived in you, it grows into an abscess. Do not assist in the birth of anger with your tongue, nor support it with your lips.[61] Hide in your inner chamber all the thoughts that arise in your heart. Give expression to the good things that your heart conceives, and your mouth will instruct with beautiful words. Examine an idea in your heart for many days, and you will see if it is right for you to express it; if it is not right, may it die in your heart, and you must conceal it in your mind. Keep your tongue from false testimony, lest the fire inflame your whole body.[62] Let the Son of the King who lives in you grow up properly, and do not present him with evil difficulties. For He wishes to be the sole inhabitant of a person, and he cannot live in the person who has many thoughts. May your tongue love silence, since this is to lick the wounds of your Lord. May your lips, with which you kiss the Son of the King, be on their guard against dissension. Let not vanity come out of your mouth, lest He keep himself from you and no longer live in you.

11. Love humility: it is like a wall as strong as iron. Love modesty: it is like fruit which causes the one who eats of it to be satisfied and rejoice and exult. All trees are discerned by their fruit. The thoughts of a person are discerned through his mouth. The sage perceives the intellect of each person he approaches through his tongue, since from the overflow of the heart the lips speak.[63] The person who fears God says good things at all times, and he learns and recites the Law of his Lord.[64] And if he hears the words of a mocker, he does not stand up to listen to them. He speaks every good word, but damaging words are not in his mouth, since his mind does not conceive anything hateful. In this way is the person who meditates on the Law of his Lord discerned. These [good words] are the fruit

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[61] A omits "with your lips"

[62] James 3:6

[63] Luke 6:45

[64] The Gospel quotation that follows is an example of this learning and reciting, and it seems clear that the teaching of Jesus that is quoted is an aspect of "the Law of the Lord".

of the good tree. And it is from the lips of the person who plans evil that a wise person discerns what he is like. If all of his words are mocking, insulting, scornful, and blasphemous, whoever hears him knows him, for these words must have been conceived before they were given birth, since every conception is given birth. Remember what our Saviour said: *"A good tree yields good fruit, and a bad tree yields bad fruit. A bad tree is not able to produce good fruit, nor a good tree bad fruit. By its fruit a tree is known. It is the same with a good man: he draws on the good that is stored up in his heart and he speaks good things. But the evil man draws on the evil which is stored up in his heart and speaks evil things, for it is from the abundance of the heart that the lips speak."* [65]

12. If there are one thousand fruit on a tree, you are able to taste the whole tree from just one of them. And if you taste one of many good and pleasing fruit, your soul desires that you alone might eat all the fruit of that tree. In this way, when a wise person approaches an evil person, he first of all assesses him by his words. For if he sees that his words are corrupt, he does not want to hear them any more. If a wise person approaches [another] wise and experienced person, he remains with him and stays until he has tasted his words. If he sees that his words are good, pleasant, knowledgable, and intelligent, from then on he wants to learn and hear all his words. It is also by their words[66] that the wise man tests those who are called humble. There are those who appear to be innocent, quiet, and humble, but whose hearts devise corrupt things. Among humble sages who contemplate good things, the humble fool resembles a bitter crab-apple which is next to a sweet apple: it looks like a sweet apple but it tastes bitter to the palate.

13. Love humility, my friend, for its fragrance is pleasing and there is a sweet flavour in it. The humble person who remains humble even when in a high position is loved by both the proud and the humble. Even if he happens to be humiliated, he is not rebuked, since he continues to conduct himself in the same manner

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[65] Matthew 7:17-18; 12:33-44; Luke 6:43-45

[66] B: "by his testing" (i.e. the wise man's)

as before. But when the proud man, who does not humble himself, is humiliated, his fall is great, since in his pride he did not humble himself. The humble person has many friends; those who ask after his well-being are without end, and many people give him praise. His humility conceals his faults in his heart, so that he might not speak evil[67] of [another] person. The humble one sits and meditates on wisdom, and his intelligence extends to the heights of heaven. The word of the humble one is listened to and obeyed, for he fashions it and brings it forth with careful consideration. The inner chambers of his heart are filled with good treasures, and his tongue produces sweet fruit. Humility is a source of well-being, and springs of peace proceed from it. Noah loved humility, and it protected him from the waters of the flood.[68] Abraham also attained humility, and he became an heir in the land of the living, since he fell down before God and humbled himself as dust and ashes.[69] Isaac grew strong through humility: kings knew[70] him and respected his covenant. Jacob was an innocent man who lived as a tent-dweller;[71] he received from his father the blessing of Esau.[72] Each one of our forefathers was humble, modest, and prudent. The Most High elevated the humble but humiliated the proud[73] and brought them to shame. Job loved humility, and his Lord testified to his integrity. Satan, the Wicked One, contended with him, but Job confounded the Adversary, the Opponent of the Just, and his Lord raised up Job, who held fast to his integrity, just as his mouth had testified.[74]

14. My friend, love this portion, the natural condition in which the children of the flesh live. This is righteousness: when a person

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[67] A omits "evil"
[68] Genesis 6:8-9
[69] Genesis 18:27
[70] A: "served" (ܐܬܫܡܫ instead of ܐܬܝܕܥ)
[71] Genesis 25:27
[72] Genesis 27:26-29
[73] Luke 1:52
[74] Job 1-2

humbles himself. The condition of Adam was earthy; he was from the ground.[75] His Lord gave him a command to keep; if he had kept what was commanded him, his Lord would have brought him to an exalted position. But because he wanted to receive exaltation, which was not a part of his original condition, his Lord made him return to his former condition of abasement. For this reason our Saviour testified, *"All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted."* [76] Adam exalted himself and was humbled, and returned to dust, his former condition. But our Saviour, exalted and glorious, humbled himself, and he was raised up and exalted to his former condition; glory was added to him, and all things were made subject to him.[77] Our Saviour, who humbled himself, received glory and was increased, but Adam, who exalted himself, received humiliation and a curse in addition to his humiliation. For this reason, my friend, it seems suitable and right for the person who loves God[78] to cherish humility and remain in a state of humbleness, so that its root might be planted on the earth and its fruits might come forth before the Lord of majesty. The fruits of humility are desirable: moderation, chastity, and agreeable thoughts are found with it. The humble are simple, patient, amiable, innocent, just, skilled in doing good, astute, quiet, wise, gentle, meek, merciful, repentant, benevolent, profound, patient, proper, and desirable. The soul of the one who loves this tree and these fruits is blessed, since it lives in rest, and the One who takes pleasure in those who are quiet and humble lives in it.

The demonstration on humility is completed.

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[75] 1Cor. 15:47
[76] Matthew 23:12; Luke 14:11, 18:14
[77] Philippians 2:6-11; 1Corinthians 15:27
[78] A omits "who loves God"

DEMONSTRATION 10: *ON SHEPHERDS*

I. CONTENTS

1 the diligent shepherd cares for his sheep: Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Amos
2 shepherding as preparation for leadership: Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David
3 hired hands who do not care for the sheep: the Lord will demand an account
4a Christ the ultimate model and authority for pastoral work
4b-5 shepherds of the Church are to have no other occupation
6 shepherds ought to benefit from their labour, but need to care for the sheep
7 author's editorial note: the present discourse is not on the whole flock, but shepherds
8 Christ the Steward of wisdom, which is God's unlimited treasure
9 all ten discourses should be read together, and are intended for those "open to persuasion"

II. TRANSLATION

1. Those who shepherd take their place at the head of the flock[1] and give the sheep the food of life. Whoever keeps watch and works hard for his sheep cares for his flock, and is a disciple of the

[1] Syr. ܪܥܝܐ . Though the term can mean "sheepfold" (i.e. an enclosure for sheep), it is used interchangeably with the term ܣܘܓܐ . Aphrahat does not seem to have used it to refer to an enclosure. Since there is no discernable difference in meaning, I have used "flock" for both terms.

Good Shepherd who gave himself on behalf of his sheep. Whoever does not lead his flock well, however, is like the hired hand who does not care for his sheep. O shepherds[2]: imitate those upright shepherds from former times! Jacob tended the sheep of Laban. He guarded [them] and worked hard and kept watch, and received [his] pay. For Jacob said to Laban, *"I have been with you for twenty years. I have not stolen your sheep or your flocks,*[3] *nor have I eaten your male sheep. Those that have been injured*[4] *I have not brought to you, so that you might exact payment for them from my hands. The scorching heat devoured me in the daytime, and the cold at night; my sleep fled from my eyes."* [5] [You] shepherds: observe how much this shepherd cared for his flock. He was awake at night to guard [it], and he kept watch and worked hard during the day [in order] to tend it. Jacob was a shepherd, and Joseph and his brothers were shepherds. Moses was a shepherd, and David, too, was a shepherd. Amos was also a shepherd. All these [men] were shepherds who tended [their] sheep and led [them] well.

2. Why, my friend, did these shepherds first tend sheep before they were chosen to tend people? It was so that they might learn how the shepherd cares for his sheep and keeps watch and works hard on behalf of his sheep. When they had learned the ways of the shepherd, they were chosen for leadership. Jacob tended the sheep of Laban; he worked hard and kept watch and led them well. Then he tended his sons and led [them] well, and he taught them how to shepherd. Joseph tended sheep with his brothers; in Egypt he was a leader of a numerous people, and he led them like a good shepherd [leads] his flock. Moses tended the sheep of his father-in-law

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[2] Syr. ܪܥܝܐ . A more modern word would be 'pastors', but Aphrahat's discussion deals quite often with actual shepherds as images of the pastor, and for the sake of consistency I have used "shepherd[s]" throughout.

[3] A: "your sheep and your goats and rams"

[4] Syr. ܪܝܫܐ (literally: "the broken one"). I have used the plural for a better English rendering.

[5] Genesis 31:38-40

Jethro. He was chosen from the flock[6] to tend his people, and he led them like a good shepherd. Moses carried his staff on his shoulder and went in front of the people that he was leading, and he tended them for forty years. He kept watch and he worked hard on behalf of his sheep; [he was] a diligent and good shepherd. When his Lord wanted to annihilate them because of their sins (they worshipped the calf), Moses prayed and made a request of his Lord: *"Either forgive the sins of the people, or erase me from your book that you have written!"* [7] This is the attentive shepherd who gives himself on behalf of his sheep. This is the heroic leader who gives himself on behalf of his sheep. This is the compassionate father who cherishes and raises his children. Moses, the great and wise shepherd who knew how to lead the flock, taught Joshua (son of Nun), a man of the Spirit who led the flock, the whole camp of Israel. [Joshua] destroyed kings and conquered[8] the land. He gave [his sheep] the land as pasture, and he divided [the land into] pens and sheepfolds for his sheep. David tended the sheep of his father, and he was led from his sheep to tend his people. He tended them with integrity of heart, and he led them with the skill of his hands.[9] When David counted his flock of sheep, wrath came down upon them and they began to be destroyed. Then David gave himself on behalf of his sheep, when he prayed, *"Lord God! I have sinned by counting [the people of] Israel. Let your hand be on me and on my father's house. What sins [have] these innocent sheep [committed]?"* [10] All attentive shepherds have given themselves in this way on behalf of their sheep.

3. The shepherds who did not care for the sheep, however, are the hired hands who only tend to their own [needs]. For this reason, the prophet calls to them and says, *"O shepherds who slay and*

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[6] This could mean either that he was chosen away from tending his sheep, or that he was chosen from among his people (God's flock).

[7] Exodus 32:32

[8] A omits "kings and conquered"

[9] Psalm 78:72

[10] 2Samuel 24:17

disperse the sheep of my flock, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord: I will provide for my sheep as a shepherd provides for his flock when there is a violent storm. I will demand an account of my sheep from you. You foolish shepherds! You wear the wool of the sheep, and you eat the flesh of the healthy ones, but you do not tend them. You do not heal the one that is sick, and you do not bind up the one [with] broken [limbs]. You do not strengthen the one that is weak, and you do not gather together those that are lost and dispersed. You have not guarded the strong and healthy ones, but have subdued them with violence. You feed on the good pasture and trample what is left over with your feet. You drink the sweet water and muddy what is left over with your feet. My sheep have eaten what you have trampled with your feet and drunk what you have muddied with your feet." [11] These are the greedy and reprehensible shepherds, the hired hands who did not tend the sheep or lead them well or rescue them from wolves. But when the Great Shepherd comes, [this] Chief of the Shepherds will call and inspect his sheep and review [the condition of] his flock. He will summon those shepherds and settle accounts with them, condemning them for their actions. But the Chief of the Shepherds will make those who have tended the sheep well rejoice and inherit life and rest. *"O ignorant and foolish shepherd, to whose right hand and right eye I left my sheep! You said of the sheep, 'Let the one that dies die, and let the one that is lost be lost, and let the one that remains eat the flesh of its companions', and because of this I will put out your right eye and wither your right arm. Your eye, which looked at a bribe, will be blinded, and your hand, which did not govern with justice, will be destroyed."* [12] *"You, my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people, and I am the Lord your God."* [13] *"Henceforth I will feed you in a good and rich pasture."* [14]

4. *"The Good Shepherd gives himself on behalf of his sheep."* [15] He also said, *"I have other sheep,*[16] *and it is right for me to bring them here, and all*

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[11] Ezekiel 34: 2-4, 9-12, 18-19

[12] Zechariah 11:9, 17. Manuscript A has: "govern with truth, will be destroyed with dryness"

[13] Ezekiel 34:21

[14] Ezekiel 34:14

[15] John 10:11

the sheep will be one, with one shepherd. It is because I give myself on behalf of the sheep that my father loves me." [17] Again, he said, *"I am the gate for the sheep. Everyone who enters through me will live, and will come in and go out and find pasture."* [18] You shepherds! Imitate this diligent shepherd, the leader of the flock, who cared so much for his sheep! He brought near those that were far away, brought back the wanderers, cared for the sick, strengthened the weak, bound up those that were broken, and guarded those that were healthy. He delivered himself up on behalf of his sheep. He chose and instructed brilliant leaders, delivered the sheep into their hands, and gave them authority over his whole flock. For he said to Simon Peter, *"Tend my sheep for me, my lambs and my ewes."* [19] Simon tended his sheep, and when his time was fulfilled he delivered the flock to you and departed. You also ought to tend and lead [them] well. For the shepherd who cares for his sheep engages in no other work. He does not establish a vineyard, or plant gardens, or fall into the troubles of this world. We have never seen a shepherd who abandoned his sheep in the field to become a merchant, nor one who became a farmer and allowed his sheep to wander. But if he abandons his sheep and does these things, he delivers his flock to the wolves.

5. Remember, my friend, what I wrote to you concerning our forefathers: that they first learned the ways of the sheep, and received from them a testing of their diligence, and then they were chosen for leadership. [This was] so that they might learn and observe how much the shepherd cares for his flock. Just as they led sheep carefully, so too would they fulfill [the duties] of this leadership. Joseph was chosen from [tending] sheep in order to lead the Egyptians in a difficult time. Moses was chosen from [tending] sheep in order to lead his people and tend them. David was led

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[16] Syr. ܥܕܬܐ . The term appears to be used to designate other *individual* sheep, while the term ܥܕܐ used throughout this demonstration is a collective noun referring to all the sheep together.

[17] John 10:16-17

[18] John 10:9

[19] John 21:15-17

from following sheep in order to become king of Israel. The Lord led Amos from following sheep and made him a prophet for his people.[20] Elisha, too, was led [away] from behind the plough in order to become a prophet in Israel.[21] Moses did not return to his sheep, and did not abandon the [new] flock that had been committed to him. David did not return to his father's sheep, but led his people with integrity of heart. Amos did not go back to tending sheep or gathering wood,[22] but he led [the people] and fulfilled the duties of a prophet. Elisha did not turn back to his plough, but served Elijah and [later] took over his position. But as for the leader who loves fields and merchandise and vineyards and olive trees and manual labour, [the Lord] does not want him to be his disciple, and he does not deliver the flock into his hands.

6. I implore you, shepherds, not to be foolish and ignorant leaders for the flock, nor to be greedy and lovers of possessions. Everyone who tends the sheep may consume their milk,[23] and whoever guides the plough will benefit from his labour. It is right for the priests to take a portion from the altar, and [for] the Levites to receive their tithes. Let the heart of the one who consumes the milk be upon his flock. Let the one who benefits from the work of his plough be attentive to his cultivation. Let the priests who take a portion from the altar serve the altar with integrity. The Levites who receive tithes have no portion in Israel. O shepherds, disciples of the Great Shepherd! You should not resemble hired hands, since the hired hand does not care for his sheep. [Rather,] you should resemble the Gentle Shepherd, who did not love his life more than his sheep. Raise the young men and nurture the young women.[24] Love the lambs, and let them be shaped by your dispositions, so that when you go to the Chief of the Shepherds you might bring

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[20] Amos 1:1; 7:14

[21] 1Kings 19:19

[22] A: "sycamores" (ܥܩܡܝܟ)

[23] 1Corinthians 9:7

[24] The same two terms are used together in 7.20. These are unmarried men and women.

him all of your sheep in full health, and so that he might give you what he has promised. *"You also will be [in] the place where I am."* [25] These brief remarks are sufficient for good shepherds and leaders.

7. I wrote to you above, my friend, to remind you about the disciplines that are appropriate for the whole flock. In this discourse, I have written to you concerning shepherds, the leaders of the flock. I have written to you, my friend, those reminders that you requested of me in your cherished letter.

8. The Steward brought me to the treasure-house of the King, and showed me many good things there. When I saw them, my intelligence was captivated by the great treasure. As I gazed upon it, it dazzled my eyes and took my thoughts captive, and made [my] reflections wander in many directions. Whoever takes from it grows rich, and enriches [others]. It lies open and unguarded before all who seek it, and though many take from it, there is no deficiency. When they give from what they have taken, what they have is greatly multiplied. Whoever takes freely should also give freely, just as he has taken. [This treasure] cannot be sold for [any] price, since there is nothing comparable to it. The treasure does not grow smaller, and those who take it are never satiated: they drink and are [still] thirsty; they eat and are [still] hungry. Whoever is not thirsty cannot drink, however, and whoever is not hungry cannot eat. Hunger for it satisfies many, and springs flow from the thirst for it. For the person who draws near to the fear of God is like the man who thirsts and approaches the spring: he drinks and is satisfied, but the spring is not diminished at all. The land that needs water to drink, drinks from the spring, and its water does not stop flowing. After the land drinks, it needs to drink again, but the spring is not lessened by its flow. So it is with the knowledge of God. Though people take from it, there is no deficiency in it, nor can it be defined by human beings.[26] The one who takes from it cannot consume it [all] by taking, and when he gives [he] is not diminished at

[25] John 12:26

[26] Literally: "children of the flesh"

all. When you take a flame from a fire with a lamp and light many lamps with it, the fire is not diminished when you take from it, nor does the lamp grow dim from lighting many [other lamps]. A single person is unable to receive the whole treasure of the King, nor does the water of the spring stop flowing when a thirsty person drinks from it. Likewise, when a person stands on a high mountain, his eyes do not perceive what is near and what is far [at the same time], and when he stands to count the stars of heaven, [he is] unable to set a limit to the hosts of heaven. Thus, when he draws near to the fear of God, he is unable to receive all of it, and when he has received as much as possible, no lessening of it will be discernable. Even when he gives from what he has taken, it is not used up in him, nor does it come to an end. Remember, my friend, what I wrote to you in the first discourse (on faith): it is right for the one who has received freely to also give freely, just as he has received. As our Lord said, *"Take freely; give freely."* [27] Whoever holds back part of what he has taken [will find that] what he has received will be taken from him.[28] For this reason, my friend, I have sent to you as much as I was able to take at this time from that treasury which never diminishes, and although I have sent it to you, all of it remains with me [still]. The treasure is never diminished: it is the wisdom of God, and the Steward is our Lord Jesus Christ, as he testified when he said, *"Everything has been committed to me by my Father."* [29] He is also the Steward of Wisdom, as the apostle said: *"Christ is the power and the wisdom of God."* [30] This wisdom is portioned out to many, yet is not diminished, just as I explained to you above that the prophets received from the Spirit of Christ yet Christ was not lessened.

9. I have written ten discourses to you, my friend, and I have explained to you what you asked me about without [receiving anything] from you. I [even] gave to you what you did not request

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[27] Matthew 10:8
[28] Matthew 25:29
[29] Matthew 11:27
[30] 1Corinthians 1:24

from me. I asked [you] your name and I wrote to you. I asked myself your question, and as I was able I lent [my knowledge] to you for your persuasion. Meditate at all times on these things that I have written to you, and work hard to read the scriptures that are read in the Church of God. These ten small books that I have written to you borrow from each other and build upon each other; do not separate them from each other. I have written to you from 'Alaph' to 'Yud', one letter after another.[31] Read and learn, you and the brothers, covenanters and sons of our faith: those from whom mockery is far removed, as I have written to you above. Keep in mind what I indicated to you [above]: I have not reached the end of these words, but [have stopped] short of the end. These things [that I have written] are not enough, but hear them from me without disputation, and discuss them with brothers who are open to persuasion. Accept whatever you hear if it truly builds up,[32] but pull down and completely overturn whatever builds up other teachings, since disputation is not able to build up. I, my friend, have brought stones for the building like a stone-mason. Let wise architects[33] carve them out and place them in the building, and all the labourers who labour in the building will receive pay from the master of the house.[34]

The demonstration on shepherds is completed.

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[31] This serves as a reminder to the reader that the *Demonstrations* were written as an acrostic.

[32] Syr. ܕܡܒܢܐ ܒܢܐ . Most readers will think of 'build up' as 'edify', yet here Aphrahat may be thinking of teachings that are *compatible* with his own (and with scripture), in the same way that his own ten discourses "build upon each other."

[33] Cf. 14.38

[34] B: "master of the vineyard"

DEMONSTRATION 11: *ON CIRCUMCISION*

I. CONTENTS

1 Abraham the father of many peoples; Jews no longer the chosen people of God
2 circumcision without faith is useless: it will not remove the penalty of sin
3 what matters is faith in God, not circumcision: different generations have had different covenants with God
4 origins of circumcision in the covenant with Abraham; Ishmael, Lot, and their descendants circumcize without faith
5 many peoples circumcize, thus Jews cannot claim that circumcision in itself benefits; what matters is circumcision of heart, which is submission to the Law
6 function of circumcision is to establish guilt by identifying as Jews those who break the Law
7 circumcision did not prevent those who angered God from dying in the wilderness
8 the Egyptians learned circumcision from Joseph, whose word was obeyed
9 a geography of the descendants of Abraham; those who did not assist the Israelites in their exodus from Egypt are punished
10 those who mix circumcision with idolatry prove the necessity of faith: those who have circumcized their heart are the true descendants of Abraham
11 each covenant was true and trustworthy in its time, but the final covenant is that of the circumcision of the heart, effected by the forgiveness of sins
12 Jesus: a new and greater Joshua, Saviour of the peoples, fulfiller of the promise to Abraham

II. TRANSLATION

1. When God blessed Abraham and made him the leader of all the faithful, the righteous, and the upright, God was not making him the father of one people, but of many peoples, since he said to him, *"Your name will not be 'Abram', but rather your name will be 'Abraham', for I have made you the father of a multitude of peoples."* [1] Now, dear friend, listen [as I discuss] the significance of [this] saying, and the basis of the dispute that we are justified in having with that people who preceded us, who believe that they are the seed of Abraham. They do not understand that they have been called 'rulers of Sodom' and 'people of Gomorrah',[2] that their father was an Amorite and their mother a Hittite,[3] and that they are rejected silver [4] and rebellious children.[5] Their leader Moses testified concerning them, *"You have been rebellious from the day that I [first] knew you."* [6] He also repeated [this thought] in the Song of Testimony: *"Your vine is from the vine of Sodom and from the stock of Gomorrah. Your grapes are bitter grapes, and your clusters are bitter for you."* [7] He also pointed, in [that] Hymn of Testimony, to the people that is from the peoples, when he said to [the Israelites], *"I will provoke you with a people that is not a people, and through a foolish people I will anger you."* [8] Through Isaiah, the Holy One testified when he said, *"I planted a vineyard and tended it, but instead of [cultivated] grapes it produced wild grapes."* [9] Jeremiah the prophet also spoke about the community of the people: *"I planted you [as] a shoot [coming] entirely from a true seed, but you changed and rebelled against me like a strange vine."* [10] Ezekiel also testified concerning the vine: *"Fire has consumed its branches, its centre has wasted away, and it*

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[1] Genesis 17:5
[2] Isaiah 1:10
[3] Ezekiel 16:45
[4] Jeremiah 6:30
[5] Isaiah 30:1; Jeremiah 3:22, 6:30
[6] Deuteronomy 9:24
[7] Deuteronomy 32:32
[8] Deuteronomy 32:21; Romans 10:9
[9] Isaiah 5:2.
[10] Jeremiah 2:21

is no longer useful." [11] "The shoot was planted [as] a true seed" [refers to] their forefathers, but the children of [these forefathers] turned away to the unclean deeds of the Amorites. When people from any of the nations serve [the cause of] justice, they are called the children and heirs of Abraham, their father. But the children of Abraham, when they do an unclean deed of the foreign peoples, become 'Sodomites' and 'the people of Gomorrah'. As Isaiah testified concerning them, *"Hear the word of the Lord, rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah!"* [12] Show me, O sage, what rulers and people were in Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Isaiah the prophet! In the days of Lot they were overthrown by the wrath [of God] and they will never be inhabited [again]. Ezekiel displays the wickedness of Sodom, and calls her the sister of Jerusalem, when he says to her, *"Your sister Sodom and her daughters have not done the evil deeds that you and your daughters have done. This was the wickedness of Sodom and her daughters: they did not take the poor and needy by the hand. When I saw these deeds among them, I overthrew them."* [13] Since Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbours were overthrown in the past, why does Isaiah say, "Hear, [you] rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah"? He called them [this] so that they would correct their behaviour, since they were doing and participating in the deeds of the Sodomites. For they are circumcized and uncircumcized, and chosen and rejected, [yet] they boast, 'We are circumcized and chosen and known from among all the peoples!'

2. This is known to all who consider [the matter]: circumcision is of no use without faith, [nor is there] any profit [in it], since faith is before circumcision, and circumcision [was only] a mark. A covenant was given to Abraham when God said to him, *"This is my covenant, that you will keep by circumcizing every male."* [14] During the time that it pleased the one who gave it, [circumcision] was kept along with the commandments of the Law, [and] it benefitted and gave

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[11] Ezekiel 15:4
[12] Isaiah 1:10
[13] Ezekiel 16:48-49
[14] Genesis 17:10

[them] life. But during the time when the Law was not kept, circumcision did not benefit [them] at all. Jereboam, son of Nabat, from the descendants of Joseph, from the tribe of Ephraim, was circumcized as the Holy One commanded Abraham, and as Moses admonished in the Law. All the kings of Israel who walked in the law of Jereboam[15] were circumcized and set apart, but because of their sins, a good memory of them was not preserved. How did Jereboam benefit from his circumcision, [he] and all the kings of Israel who walked in his footsteps? And what use or benefit was [circumcision] to Manessah son of Hezekiah, on account of whose sins (which multiplied) God was unable to forgive Jerusalem again?[16]

3. In each generation, as it pleased him, God gave his covenants to all generations and tribes, and they were kept in their [various] times but [then] replaced. He commanded Adam not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,[17] but because he did not keep the commandment and the covenant, he was condemned. As for Enoch, who was pleasing to God, it was not [because] the commandment about the tree was kept by him that [God] took him to [the land of] life, but because he was faithful.[18] [Being] pleasing [to God] did not resemble [keeping] the commandment not to eat from the tree. [God] saved Noah, who kept [his] integrity and righteousness, from the wrath of the flood. He made a covenant with him and with the generations after him, so that they might increase and multiply: the covenant of the rainbow, between God, the earth, and all flesh.[19] Circumcision was not given with one of these covenants. When [God] chose Abraham, it was not because of circumcision that he called him and chose him and named

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[15] Here "law" appears to refer to Jereboam's sinful conduct rather than divine Law.

[16] 2Kings 21:16

[17] Genesis 1:16-17

[18] Genesis 5:22-24; Hebrews 11:5-6

[19] Genesis 9:12-17

him to become a father for all peoples,[20] but because of faith. [It was only] after his believing [that God] commanded him to circumcize,[21] for if [people] lived through circumcision, Abraham certainly would have first circumcized and then believed. And if circumcision was given as a way[22] to eternal life, scripture would make known that 'Abraham circumcized, and his circumcision was counted as righteousness for him.' But this is what is written: *"Abraham believed in God and his believing was counted as righteousness for him."* [23] Those who believed while not circumcized lived, and [for] those who circumcized but did not believe, their circumcision was no advantage. Abel and Enoch and Noah and Shem and Japeth were not pleasing to God through circumcision, but each one of them kept their covenants in their times, and believed that he is one who gives support in each generation as it pleases him. Melchizedek was a priest of God Most High. He blessed Abraham when he was not circumcized, and it is well-known that the lesser one is blessed by the one who is greater than him.

4. Listen, my friend, and I will show you how circumcision was given. When Abraham believed and came out from Ur of the Chaldeans and went to live in Harran, God had not [yet] commanded him to circumcize. While he was living in the land of Canaan for twenty-four years, he was not circumcized, since he had no son, the son concerning whom it was promised that through him righteous [people], kings, priests, and annointed ones would be born. When he was ninety-nine years old, however, the Holy One made known to him that when [he had] completed one hundred years, a son would be born to him. Then he circumcized himself, so that when he was one hundred years old, Isaac would be born to him. [The Holy One] commanded him to circumcize the flesh of his foreskin as a mark and a sign of the covenant, so that when his descendants multiplied they would be distinguished from all the

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[20] Genesis 17:5
[21] Genesis 17:9-14
[22] Literally: "advantage" or "profit"
[23] Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3

peoples among whom they would live, and not take part in their unclean deeds. Abraham circumcized the flesh of his foreskin when he was ninety-nine years old, and he circumcized his son Ishmael when he was thirteen years old. Abraham also circumcized on that day those who were born into his household and those bought with his money, according to what God had spoken to him. After he circumcized, Isaac was conceived and born, and was circumcized on the eighth day. The descendants of Abraham (Issac, Ishmael, Jacob and his sons, Esau and his offspring) observed [the rite] of circumcision for one hundred and ninety years, until Jacob entered Egypt. In Egypt, the descendants of Jacob observed it for two hundred and twenty-five years, until they went into the wilderness. And when he saw that Abraham his uncle circumcized, Lot also circumcized his offspring after he had separated from him, and they preserved circumcision as a custom, without faith.

5. Now, if [the descendants of Jacob] live through circumcision, then the descendants of Ishmael and Keturah and Lot and Esau also live, since they are circumcized. But though they are circumcized, they worship many idols. Jeremiah, the prophet, has shown me clearly that the circumcized who do not believe are [really] uncircumcized, and that they will not be saved from [God's] wrath by their circumcision. For he said, *"I will see to all those who have circumcized in uncircumcision: Egyptians and Jews, Moab[ites] and Edom[ites], the descendants of Ammon and all those living in the wilderness whose faces are shaved. For all these peoples are uncircumcized and all the house of Israel is uncircumcized in heart."* [24] If they benefitted from circumcision, why was the Jew counted with Egyptians, Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, and those whose faces are shaved (who are the descendants of Hagar and Keturah)? It is known that their circumcision was [really] uncircumcision for them, since he also brought wrath upon Judah, as [he did] upon all those who circumcized in uncircumcision. When the Holy One saw that they said, 'By this we live: we are descendants of Abraham and circumcized', yet they did not bend their stiff necks in submission to the Law, he said to them

[24] Jeremiah 9:25-26.

through the prophet, *"Circumcize the foreskin of your heart, and do not stiffen your necks again."* [25] It is known, then, that whoever does not circumcize the foreskin of his heart gains no advantage from the circumcision of the flesh, just as it was no benefit to all those who circumcized in uncircumcision.

6. Be assured, my friend, that circumcision was a mark so that [the Israelites] might be distinguished from unclean peoples. Observe that when [God] brought them out from Egypt and they walked in the wilderness for forty years, they did not circumcize, since they were one people and had not been mixed with other peoples. He did not mark them there since they grazed alone. With respect to [the fact that] he marked the seed of Abraham, it was not because all the peoples were not his that he distinguished the seed of Abraham [as] his own flock, but [rather], because of their deeds, he abandoned all the peoples who performed evil deeds of idolatry. He did not mark them to make known to himself that they were the seed of Abraham (since even when he had not marked them, he knew them), but [rather] so that they might know one another, in order that they might not [be able to] take refuge in false pretenses. For if they were not marked, and if some among them were found to be worshipping idols or fornicating or committing adultery or stealing or doing whatever is outside of the Law, then a situation might arise in which those among them who are found doing these things might deny [their guilt] and apostasize ('We are not the children of Abraham!'), so that they might not be killed and receive punishment. [God] has decreed a sentence of death, written in the Law, against those who are found [doing] these things. If someone is found transgressing the Law and engaging in one of these offensive [acts], he is not able to take refuge in false pretense ('I am not of the seed and offspring of Abraham!'), for if he happens to deny [this], they will identify him by his circumcision and impose on him the punishment appropriate for his wrongdoing. If it was not in this sense that circumcision was given, it would also have been necessary for them to be circumcized in the wilderness,

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[25] Deuternomy 10:16

but because they were distinguished from [other] peoples and were grazing alone in the wilderness, they were not marked. When they were crossing the Jordan, however, the Lord commanded Joshua son of Nun, *"Circumcize the Israelites again, for a second time."* [26] Why did he say to Joshua that he should circumcize them a second time? It was because they were [already] circumcized in their hearts, as it says in the prophet, *"Circumcize the foreskin of your heart[s], and do not stiffen your necks again!"* [27] Joshua circumcized them again and marked them in their flesh a second time. How do you understand the statement 'Joshua circumcized the people a second time'? Take note that they were not circumcized in their flesh, since after Joshua circumcized them, scripture testifies that *"Joshua circumcized all those that had been born in the wilderness, for no child born in the wilderness had been circumcized."* [28]

7. See my friend, and marvel at this, that the circumcized who went out from Egypt died in the wilderness as a result of their sins,[29] since they exasperated the Spirit of the Holy One and did not believe him. It is clear that if they had been faithful, they would not have been prevented from entering the land of promise. Among the six hundred thousand who went out from Egypt, [only] Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh[30] lived and entered the land and inherited it. Those who were born in the wilderness and who believed lived and entered to inherit the land, though they were not circumcized. Joshua circumcized them when they entered the land of the Canaanites, and this was counted as two circumcisions.[31]

8. When [God] brought wrath upon all those who circumcize in uncircumcision, why did he include the Egyptians (who were not

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[26] Joshua 5:2
[27] Deuternomy 10:16. Moses is referred to as a "prophet".
[28] Joshua 5:5-6
[29] Numbers 14:32-37
[30] Numbers 13:4-16
[31] Joshua 5:7

of the seed of Abraham) with the Moabites and the Ammonites (who were the descendants of Lot the brother of Abraham) and with the Edomites (who were the descendants of Esau) and with those who shave their faces and live in the desert (who are the descendants of Ishmael and Keturah) and [with] Judah the seed of Jacob. All of these [others] are the seed of the house of Abraham. The Egyptians, however, received circumcision as a custom without faith from the Israelites when they were living among them. They also received it from Joseph, who circumcized Manessah and Ephraim when they were born to him. They learned from Joseph and began to circumcize, since in all things the command of Joseph was acted upon in Egypt. There are those who say, my friend, that when the daughter of Pharoah found Moses, she knew that he was an Israelite from the covenant that was in his flesh.[32] The meaning of the passage [in question] is not as it appears, however,[33] since the covenant of the circumcision of Moses was in no way distinguishable from the circumcision of the Egyptians. Whoever does not know that the Egyptians were circumcized, let him be convinced by Jeremiah. When the daughter of Pharoah found Moses and saw that he was floating in the river, she knew that he was from the Hebrews because it had not been commanded that Egyptians should be thrown into the river. With respect to the Israelites, Pharoah had commanded, *"Every male child that is born must be thrown in the river."* [34] [Pharoah's daughter] knew that this thing had been done because of fear of the commandment. When she saw that he had been placed in a wooden container, she knew that it was so that [Pharoah's] men would not find [the child] that they concealed him, built a container for him, and pushed it into the river. If the Israelites had been distinguished by circumcision while the Egyp-

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[32] Exodus 2:6

[33] The term ܫܡܥܬܐ could be translated more technically as "literal sense". Aphrahat's use of the term is limited, however, and there is no clear indication that he used it in this technical way. Moreover, one would expect the preposition ܒ before the term in this reading, i.e. 'as is seen *by* the literal sense of the passage'.

[34] Exodus 1:22

tians had not, Moses would not have been able to grow up [in] Pharoah's household, since at any time in his childhood the covenant that was in his flesh would have become known. Furthermore, if the daughter of Pharoah transgressed the law and commandment of her father, neither would the law and the commandment of Pharoah have been upheld in the rest of Egypt.

9. I will also prove to you, my friend, that the descendants of Keturah share a border with the descendants of Ishmael. When the Midianites (who are the descendants of Keturah) and the children of the East (who are the descendants of Ishmael) gathered together and came to engage Israel in war in the days of Gideon son of Joash, they wanted to subdue Israel in alliance with each other, but they were delivered into the hands of Gideon and his three hundred chiefs.[35] I have explained to you concerning the descendants of Keturah because [both] they and the descendants of Ishmael were living in the wilderness. From the time that Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away, the abode of Ishmael and his offspring was in the wilderness. It is written as follows: *"He settled in the wilderness and learned [to use] the bow,"* [36] [and] *"His hand will be against everyone, and the hand of everyone against him; he will live at the border of all his brothers."* [37] On one of his sides, in the east, lived the descendants of Esau, who were the Edomites. When the Israelites came out from Egypt they went around the land of Edom, [including] the mountain of Esau. The Ammonites and the Moabites also shared a border with them on the north, while the descendants of Keturah were neighbours to the east of the Edomites (the descendants of Esau). When Abraham sent away the children of Keturah, he sent them first to the east, while the children of Hagar took possession of all the land of the south. The Edomites (the descendants of Esau) lived to the east of all of them, as far as Bozrah. It was for this reason that the Lord commanded Moses, *"Do not go near the land of the descendants of Esau. I have not [even] given you from their land enough*

[35] Judges 7
[36] Genesis 21:20
[37] Genesis 16:12

space for your foot to tread, since I have given to Esau the mountain of Seir. Buy bread from them with money, however, and eat, and buy water from them with money, and drink." [38] Moses did as the Lord commanded him, and he did not disturb the descendants of Esau. When he reached as far as Reqem the Magnificent,[39] he sent messengers with words of peace to the king of Edom, and said to him, *"Your brother Jacob says: You know [about] all the hardship that overtook us on the way, and that the Egyptians enslaved us. We are now at Reqem, a city that is at the limit of your border. We wish now to pass through your land. We will go by the king's road. Sell us bread to eat and water to drink, we and our animals. We will pay for them."* But he said to the Israelites, *"You will not cross over my border, or else I will come out to meet you with a sword."* [40] And the Israelites turned away from him when they saw that he was not persuaded. When they were passing by their border the Israelites took from them Bozrah, which is in the wilderness; they inherited it and made it a city of refuge. Whoever wishes to receive proof that in ancient times Bozrah belonged to the descendants of Esau (who were the Edomites) should listen to Isaiah the prophet. He saw the Holy One *"coming from Edom, [and] from Bozrah with blood-red garments,"* [41] who trampled on the descendants of Esau and crushed them and exacted payment from them, because they did not receive their brothers but preserved their anger forever.[42] Whoever is still not persuaded that Bozrah served the Edomites in ancient times should listen to [the words of] Genesis about the kings that ruled in Bozrah: *"Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah ruled."* [43] Isaiah also said, *"[My sword] will descend upon the Edomites, on the people who have been condemned in judgement."* [44] David said, *"I have thrown my sandals on*

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[38] Deuteronomy 2:5-6

[39] According to Pierre (1989, p. 562, note 10) this is the name always given to Kadesh in the targums and the Peshitta.

[40] Numbers 20:14-18

[41] Isaiah 63:1

[42] Literally: "because he did not receive his brother but preserved his anger forever" (Esau represents the whole tribe)

[43] Genesis 36:33

[44] Isaiah 34:5

Edom," [45] since Esau always destroyed his companions and always preserved his anger, and did not allow his brother to cross over his border.[46] For this reason he was condemned in judgement: he preserved his wrath forever. When the Israelites turned aside from the Edomites, their brothers, they sent messengers to the Moabites, the descendants of Lot, in order to pass over their border. They did not listen, however, nor were they convinced, and they hired for themselves Balaam son of Beor to curse them.[47] Because they did not allow [the Israelites] to cross over their border peacefully, the Holy One commanded that no Ammonite or Moabite could enter the assembly of the Lord, even up to the tenth generation, since they did not bring bread and water to the Israelites on [their] journey, but met them with the sword when they were troubled and weary.[48] With respect to the Egyptians and the Edomites, [the Holy One] commanded the Israelites not to deny them [entrance into the assembly], the Egyptians because they lived in their land, and the Edomites because they were their brothers.[49]

10. I have shown all of this to you clearly so that you might know that *"Ishmael lived at the border of all his brothers and was a wild ass of a man."* [50] Abraham gave gifts to the descendants of Keturah and sent them [away] to Ishmael their brother, so that they would not be inheritors together with Isaac, the son of the promise. Now, if they [all] live through circumcision, then the descendants of Ishmael, Keturah, Lot (Moabites and Ammonites), Esau (Edomites), and the Egyptians will boast all the more, since they are circumcized yet worship many idols! It is obvious, therefore, that there is no profit in circumcision without faith. Each [person] who circumcizes the foreskin of his heart, however, believes and lives and be-

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[45] Psalm 60:8; 108:9
[46] Cf. Amos 1:11
[47] Numbers 22-24
[48] Deuteronomy 23:3-6
[49] Deuteronomy 23:7-8
[50] Genesis 16:12

comes a child of Abraham. The word that God spoke to Abraham is [thus] fulfilled: *"I have made you the father of a multitude of peoples."* [51]

11. In each case the Law and the covenant was changed. First, God changed the covenant of Adam and gave another [one] to Noah. He also gave [one] to Abraham, but he changed that [one] and gave another [one] to Moses. When [the covenant] of Moses was not kept, he gave another [one] in the final generation, a covenant that will not be changed. For Adam, the covenant involved not eating from the tree. For Noah, it was [represented by] the rainbow. [God] first chose Abraham because of his faith, and later [decreed] circumcision, a seal and a mark for his offspring. [The covenant] of Moses [is represented by] a lamb offered as a Passover sacrifice for the people. Not one of these covenants is like the next. Moreover, the circumcision that pleases the One who gave the covenants is that concerning which Jeremiah spoke: *"Circumcize the foreskin of your hearts."* [52] If the covenant that God gave to Abraham is true, this one also is true and trustworthy, and no giving of the Law can be rejected by those who are outside of the Law or by those who are under the Law. He gave the Law to Moses with its observances and statutes, but when they did not keep the Law and its statutes he annulled it. He promised to give a new testament, and said that it was not like the previous [one], though the Giver of both of them was one [and the same]. This is the testament that he promised to give: *"They will all know me, from their youngest to their oldest."* [53] In this testament there is no circumcision of the flesh or mark of the people. We know with certainly, my friend, that in each generation God establishes laws, and they function for as long as he pleases but then they are changed. As the apostle said, *"In the past, the kingdom of God lived in various forms in various times."* [54] This is [well-] known and obvious to the wise and to those who understand: any man who is [a member] of the covenant and [who]

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[51] Genesis 17:5
[52] Jeremiah 4:4
[53] Jeremiah 31:34
[54] Hebrews 1:1

yearns for circumcision because of his licentiousness and lustfulness may be circumcized, but he does not understand what the apostle said: *"I wish that those who are confusing you would completely mutilate themselves."* [55] Our God is true, and his covenants are very trustworthy, and each covenant in its time was true and [able to] be trusted. Those who are circumcized in heart live, and they are circumcized a second time at the true Jordan, the baptism of the forgiveness of sins.

12. When he and his people crossed the Jordan, Joshua son of Nun circumcized the people a second time with a blade of flint. Jesus,[56] our Saviour, circumcized a second time with the circumcision of the heart the peoples who believed in him. They plunged into baptism and were circumcized by the blade of his word, which is sharper than a two-edged sword.[57] Joshua son of Nun brought the people to the land of promise. Jesus, our Saviour, promised the land of life to all who have crossed the true Jordan and who believe and circumcize the foreskin of their hearts. Joshua son of Nun set up stones as a witness in Israel. Jesus, our Saviour, called Simon the 'true stone' and established him as a faithful witness among the peoples. Joshua son of Nun celebrated the Passover in the plain of Jericho, in a cursed land, and the people ate the bread of the land. Jesus, our Saviour, celebrated the Passover with his disciples in Jerusalem, a city that he had cursed (*"Not [one] stone will be left on [another] stone"* [58]), and there he gave the mystery in the bread of life. Joshua son of Nun condemned the greedy Achan, who stole and hid. Jesus, our Saviour, condemned the greedy Judah, who stole and hid money from the box that he was holding. Joshua son of Nun destroyed unclean peoples. Jesus, our Saviour, threw down Satan and his army. Joshua son of Nun made the sun stand [still] in the sky. Jesus, our Saviour, made the sun set at noon when they crucified him. Joshua son of Nun [was] a saviour of the people.

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[55] Galatians 5:12

[56] Syr. ܝܫܘܥ , spelled the same as "Joshua"

[57] Hebrews 4:12

[58] Matthew 24:2

Jesus was called the Saviour of the peoples. Blessed are those among the uncircumcized who are circumcized of heart and born of water, a second circumcision. They are inheritors, together with Abraham, the leader of the faithful and the father of all the peoples, whose faith was considered righteousness for him.

The demonstration on circumcision is completed.

DEMONSTRATION 12: *ON THE PASSOVER*

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II. TRANSLATION

1. The Holy One commanded Moses to offer the Passover sacrifice on the fourteenth [day] of the first month. He said to Moses, *"Command the assembly of the Israelites to take for themselves a single, year-old lamb, a lamb in which there is no blemish; they must take it from among the lambs and young goats. All the Israelites must offer a Passover sacrifice to*

the Lord." [1] He said to Moses, *"They must take a lamb on the tenth [day] of the month, and it must be kept for themselves until the fourteenth [day] of the month. They must slaughter it at sunset and sprinkle some of its blood on the doors of their homes [as protection] from the destroyer, so that when the destroyer passes through the land of Egypt, he will not come in against them. The whole assembly must eat the lamb quickly. They must eat it in the following way: with their waistbands secure,*[2] *[with] their sandals on their feet, and [with] their staffs in their hands."*[3] He warned them to eat it quickly, but not to eat from it while it was raw, or thorougly boiled in water, but rather when it had been roasted in fire.[4] They were not to take any of it outside the house, or to break any bone in it.[5] The Israelites did these things.[6] They ate the Passover sacrifice on the fourteenth [day] of the first month (which is Nisan, the month of flowers, the first month of the year).

2. See these mysteries, my friend, that [were expressed] when the Holy One commanded the offering of the Passover sacrifice. He warned them concerning all of its laws and said to them, *"You must eat it in one house, and must not take any of it outside the house."* [7] Moses commanded them as follows: *"When you enter the land that the Lord has given you and offer the Passover sacrifice in its time, it is forbidden to slaughter the Passover sacrifice in [any] one of your towns, except in the place that the Lord your God will choose. You and your household will rejoice in your festival."* [8] He also commanded them as follows: *"No stranger or hired hand should eat of the Passover sacrifice, but a servant who has become*

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[1] Exodus 12:3, 5

[2] Syr. ܚܨܝ̈ܗܘܢ ܐܣܝܪܝܢ . This could be translated "their loins bound up", but for English readers the term 'loin' is misleading, since it has come to refer to the reproductive organs rather than the small of the back (as here).

[3] Exodus 12:3, 6, 7, 11, 12

[4] Exodus 12:9

[5] Exodus 12:46

[6] Literally: "acted thus"

[7] Exodus 12:46

[8] Deuteronomy 16:5, 6, 11

yours [by being] bought with money may eat of the Passover sacrifice when you have circumcized the flesh of his foreskin." [9]

3. Great and wonderful are these mysteries, my friend! When the Israelites[10] were in their own land, it was forbidden to offer the Passover sacrifice, unless [it was] in Jerusalem. In our day, [the Israelites] are scattered throughout all peoples and languages, among the unclean and the uncircumcized, and they eat their bread in uncleanness among the peoples. Ezekiel spoke about them, when [God] showed him a sign that he would eat his bread in uncleanness, and he petitioned by saying,*"O Lord of lords! My soul has not been defiled, nor has defiled flesh entered my mouth!"* [11] And [God] said to Ezekiel, *"This will be the sign: the Israelites will eat their bread in defilement among the peoples where I will scatter them."* [12] Now if, as I said above, it was forbidden, while the Israelites were in their land, to slaughter the Passover sacrifice at any place except before a single altar in Jerusalem, how is it possible [for them] to perform the mystery of the Passover sacrifice in our [own] day, when they are scattered among foreign peoples? They now have no authority [to do so]! [God] testifies about them as follows in the prophet: *"The Israelites will live for many days without sacrifices and without an altar, without [anyone] to wear the ephod or to offer incense."* [13] Again, he said to Jerusalem, *"I will bring an end to her celebrations and her festivals, her new moon [rituals] and her sabbaths."* [14] About the ark of the testament he said, *"They will not again say 'the ark of the testament of the Lord'; they will not remember it, and it will not be made again."* [15] Now that [God] has said that they will not remember it, [that] it will not be made again, and [that] it will not come to mind, why are they determined to do it?

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[9] Exodus 12:43-44

[10] Here and throughout this section, the Syriac has simply "Israel". I have substituted "the Israelites" for a better English rendering.

[11] Ezekiel 4:14

[12] Ezekiel 4:13

[13] Hosea 3:4

[14] Hosea 2:11

[15] Jeremiah 3:16

Earlier, Moses had said about them, *"I will make them jealous by a people that is not a people, and I will anger them with a foolish people."* [16] I ask you, O wise debater of the people who does not examine the words of the Law: show me when this word that God would make his people jealous by a people that is not a people was fulfilled? And when did he anger them with a foolish people? If you are made jealous by the people that is from the peoples, you fulfill the word that is written, which Moses earlier inscribed in the Book. And if you offer the Passover sacrifce in any of the places where you live, you offer it in transgression of the commandment. Because [of this], a letter of divorce has been written for you.

4. If you are not convinced, listen to Jeremiah the prophet, who said, *"I have abandoned my house! I have abandoned my inheritance! I have given my soul's beloved into the hands of her enemies, and my inheritance has become [like] a speckled bird of prey to me!"* [17] I ask you: what does this 'speckled bird of prey' [represent]? The speckled bird of prey is the Church of the peoples. Observe that he called it 'speckled', since [the Church] has been gathered together from many languages and brought from distant peoples. If, however, you are not convinced that the peoples are the inheritance of God, listen again how Jeremiah speaks, when he calls to the peoples and rejects Israel. He said, *"'Stand on the roads and see, and ask about the paths of the world! See which road is good and travel on it!' But you said, 'We will not go!'"* [18] Again he said, *"I have set up watchmen over you, so that you might hear the call of the trumpet."* But they said, *"We will not listen!"* [19] Then, when the Israelites did not listen to him, he turned to the Church which is from the peoples. He said, *"Listen, [you] peoples, and know, Church that is within them!"* [20] Moreover, David said, *"Remember your Church, which you acquired long ago!"* [21] And Isaiah said, *"Hear what I have done, [you]*

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[16] Deuteronomy 32:21
[17] Jeremiah 12:7-8
[18] Jeremiah 6:16
[19] Jeremiah 6:17
[20] Jeremiah 6:18
[21] Psalm 74:2

peoples, and know my might, [you] who are far off!" [22] Isaiah spoke further about the Church within the peoples that was going to come into existence. He said, *"In the last days, the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the prince of the mountains, higher than the heights, and all the peoples will stream to it."* [23] Why did Isaiah say, *"Hear what I have done, [you] peoples, and know my might, [you] who are far off! The sinners in Zion have become troubled, and trembling has seized the ungodly."* [24] What is this 'hearing what he has done' and 'making known his might to those far off', [this] 'troubling of the sinners in Zion' and [this] 'trembling seizing the ungodly'? He calls the peoples and through them makes the people jealous. He makes known his might to his distant ones when he brings wrath, with which he judges his people. He troubles the sinners of Zion, which is named the 'Holy City'.[25] He made trembling seize the ungodly, who are prophets of falsehood, as he said about the prophets of Jerusalem, *"From them godlessness has gone out to all the earth."* [26]

5. You have listened, my friend, to what I have said to you about this Passover sacrifice, namely, that its mystery was given to the former people, but its truth is heard today among the peoples. The minds of childish and ignorant people are greatly troubled by this great feast day, with respect to how we should understand and observe it. Our Saviour is the true lamb, one year old and with no blemish in it. As the prophet said concerning him, *"There is no iniquity in him, nor can deceit be found in his mouth, but the Lord wished to humble him and make him suffer."* [27] He was described as "a year old" because he was a child with respect to sins. As he said to his disciples, *"Unless you change and become like these children, you will not enter the king-*

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[22] Isaiah 33:13
[23] Isaiah 2:2
[24] Isaiah 33:13-14
[25] Isaiah 52:1
[26] Jeremiah 23:15
[27] Isaiah 53:9-10

dom of heaven." [28] And concerning the righteous one, Isaiah said, *"The child who sins will die [like] a hundred-year old who has been cursed."* [29]

6. Our Saviour ate the Passover sacrifice with his disciples during the night watch of the fourteenth. He offered to his disciples the sign of the true Passover sacrifice. After Judas left them, he took bread and blessed [it], and gave [it] to his disciples. He said to them, *"This is my body. Take and eat from it, all of you."* He also blessed the wine as follows, saying to them, *"This is my blood, a new testament, which is shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. Keep doing this in memory of me when you gather together."* [30] Our Lord said these things before he was seized. He stood up from where he had offered the Passover sacrifice and given his body to be eaten and his blood to be drunk, and he went with his disciples to that place where he was seized. Whoever eats his body and drinks his blood is counted with the dead. By his own hands our Lord gave his body to be eaten, and before he was crucified he gave his blood to be drunk. He was seized on the night of the fourteenth and judged before the sixth hour. At the sixth hour, they condemned him, raised him up, and crucified him. When they were judging him he did not speak, and he gave no reply to his judges.[31] He could have spoken or replied, yet [on a deeper level] it was impossible for one who was counted with the dead to speak. From the sixth hour to the ninth there was darkness, and at the ninth hour he handed over his Spirit to his Father. He was among the dead during the night of the dawn of the fifteenth, the night and the whole day of the Sabbath, and three hours on Friday. During the night of the dawn of Sunday, at the [same] time that he had given his body and blood to his disciples, he rose from among the dead.

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[28] Matthew 18:3

[29] Isaiah 65:20

[30] Matthew 26:26-28; cf. Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1Corinthians 11:24-25

[31] Matthew 26:63; 27:12-14; cf. Mark 14:61; 15:5; Luke 23:9

7. Now show us, O sage, what these three days and three nights were in which our Saviour was among the dead! We see the three hours on Friday, and the night when the Sabbath dawned, and the whole day, and [then] during the night of the first [day] of the week he rose. Define for me what they are, these three days and three nights! Take note that although the day and the night were completed, our Saviour spoke truly when he said, *"Just as Jonah son of Mattai in the stomach of a fish for three days and three nights, so too will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth."* [32] Thus, from the time when he gave his body to be eaten and his blood to be drunk, there were three days and three nights. It was night when Judas left them,[33] and the eleven disciples ate the body of our Saviour and drank his blood. Now take note: [this was] one night, when Friday was dawning. And take note [that the time] up to the sixth hour, when they judged him, [was] one day and one night. [Then] there were three hours that were dark, from the sixth hour to the ninth, and there were [also] three hours after the darkness. Take note [that this makes] two days and two nights. [Then] the night when the Sabbath dawned was completed, as well as the whole day of the Sabbath. Thus our Lord completed three days and three nights among the dead, and during the night of Sunday he rose from among the dead.

8. The Passover[34] of the Jews is on the day of the fourteenth, its night-time and day-time. Our day of great suffering, however, is Friday, the fifteenth day, its night-time and day-time. After the Passover, Israel eats unleavened bread for seven days until the twenty-first day of the month, but we observe the [days of] unleavened bread as the festival of our Saviour. They eat unleavened bread with bitter herbs, but Our Saviour rejected that cup of bit-

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[32] Matthew 12:40

[33] John 13:30

[34] Syr. ܦܨܚܐ , the same word translated up to this point as "Passover sacrifice". Here, however, I use "Passover" since the whole festival is being referred to.

terness and removed[35] all the bitterness of the peoples when he tasted but did not wish to drink. The Jews bring their sins to mind from season to season, but we remember the crucifixion and humiliation of our Saviour. They departed from the slavery of Pharoah by means of the Passover sacrifice, but we were saved from the slavery of Satan on the day of [Christ's] crucifixion. They sacrificed a lamb from the flock and by its blood were delivered from the destroyer, but we have been saved from the destructive actions that we were doing by the blood of the Son [who is] approved. Moses was a leader for them, but for us Jesus has become a Guide and Saviour. Moses divided the sea for them and enabled them to pass through,[36] but our Saviour divided Sheol and broke down its gates when he went inside of it and opened them and prepared a way for all those who believed in him. Manna was given to [the Israelites] to eat,[37] but our Lord gave us his body to eat. [Moses] brought forth water from a rock,[38] but for us our Saviour let living water flow from within himself.[39] [God] promised them the land of the Canaanites as an inheritance, but through a declaration he promised us the land of life. Moses lifted up the bronze serpent for them, so that whoever looked at it would survive the bite of the serpent,[40] but Jesus lifted up himself for us so that when we look to him we might be saved from the bite of the serpent who is Satan. Moses made the temporary tabernacle for them, so that they might bring sacrifices and offerings into it and be purged of their sins, but Jesus raised up the tent of David,[41] which had fallen, and it [continues] to stand. He said to the Jews, *"After you destroy this temple that you see, I will raise it up in three days,"* [42] and his disciples understood that he was speaking about his body when he

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[35] Syr. ܥܨܠ , which could also mean 'carried'.
[36] Exodus 14:21-29
[37] Exodus 16
[38] Exodus 17:2-7; Numbers 20:2-13
[39] Syr. ܡܢ ܟܪܣܗ (literally: "from his belly" or "from his womb")
[40] Numbers 21:9
[41] Amos 9:11; Acts 15:16
[42] John 2:19

said that after they destroyed it he would raise it up in three days. In that tent he has promised us life, and in it our sins have been purged. [Moses] called their [tent] the 'temporary' tabernacle because it would function for [only] a short time, but ours [is called] the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is forever.

9. With respect to this lamb of the Passover sacrifice, be persuaded, my friend, about the reason that the Holy One commanded that it be eaten in one house and not in many houses. The one house is the Church of God. Again, he said, *"Hired hands and foreigners must not eat from it."* [43] Who are [these] hired hands and foreigners? They are the schools of the Evil One,[44] who are not permitted to eat from the Passover sacrifice, concerning which our Saviour said, *"When he sees that a wolf is coming, the hired hand (who does not own the flock) leaves the flock and flees."* [45] [God] said, *"You must not eat from it while it is raw or after it has been thoroughly boiled."* [46] This is known and explained as that offering which rises up in the Church of God, which is baked in the fire but not thoroughly boiled or offered when raw.[47] He said, *"You must eat it in the following way: with your waistbands secure, your sandals on your feet, and your staffs in your hands."* [48] These mysteries are very great! Whoever eats of Christ, the true Lamb, secures his waistband in faith, places on his feet the preparation that [comes from] the Gospel, and holds in his hand the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.[49] Again, [God]

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[43] Exodus 12:45

[44] Syr. ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܡܠܦܢܘܗܝ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܒܝܫܐ . The term translated here as "schools" occurs (in the plural) in six other passages in the *Demonstrations* (1.19; 3.9; 6.18; 8.24; 10.9; 14.30), at times translated as "teachings". In all but one of these ܡܠܦܢܐ̈ is associated with ܒܝܫܐ , and it is quite clear that the latter term refers in those contexts to the Evil One. The one exception proves the rule, since there too the reference is to "teachings" that are to be rejected without qualification.

[45] John 10:12

[46] Exodus 12:9

[47] The reference is to the eucharistic bread.

[48] Exodus 12:11

[49] Ephesians 6:14-17

said, *"No bone in it should be broken,"* [50] and this was fulfilled on the day that they crucified him. They broke the legs of those who were crucified with him, but they did not break his. It says, *"The word that was written was fulfilled: 'No bone in him should be broken.'"* [51] [God] said, *"[As for] the servant bought with money, first let the flesh of his foreskin be circumcized, and then he may eat of the Passover sacrifice."* [52] The servant who is bought represents the sinful person who repents and is bought by the blood of Christ. When his heart has been circumcized of evil actions, he then comes to baptism, the consummation of true circumcision, and he is joined to the people of God, and participates in the body and blood of Christ. As for where he said *"It must be eaten quickly,"* [53] this is done in the Church of God, where they eat the lamb quickly in trembling and fear while standing on their feet, because they hasten to eat life from the spiritual gift that they have received.

10. Israel was baptized in the midst of the sea on that Passover night of the day of salvation, but our Saviour washed the feet of his disciples on the night of the Passover, [which represents] the mystery of baptism. You should know, my friend, that our Saviour gave the true baptism that night. As long as he was living with his disciples, they were baptized [by] that baptism of the law of the priests, the baptism that John spoke of [when he said] *"Repent of your sins!"* [54] On that night he showed them the mystery of the baptism of suffering at his death, as the apostle said, *"You have been buried with him in baptism for death, and you rise with him through the power of God."* [55] Be aware, my friend, that the baptism of John does not bring about the forgiveness of sins, but [only] repentance. The Acts of the Twelve Apostles pronounces on this [matter]. When the disciples asked those who had been called from the peoples and from

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[50] Exodus 12:46
[51] John 19:36
[52] Exodus 12:44
[53] Exodus 12:11
[54] Matthew 3:2
[55] Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12

Israel, *"Have you been baptized?",* they said, *"We have been baptized with the baptism of John."* [56] Then they baptized them with the true baptism, the mystery of the suffering of our Saviour. Our Saviour also testified to this when he said to his disciples, *"John baptized with water, but you will baptize with the Holy Spirit."* [57] Our Saviour took water and poured [it] into a footbath, took a cloth, secured his waistband, and began to wash the feet of his disciples. When he came to Simon Peter, he said to him, *"You, my Lord, are washing my feet for me? You will never wash my feet for me!"* Jesus said to him, *"If I do not wash for you, you will have no reward with me!"* Simon said to him, *"Then, my Lord, do not wash only my feet for me, but also my hands and my head!"* Jesus said to him, *"Whoever has bathed needs only his feet to be washed."* When he had washed the feet of his disciples, he took up his garments, reclined, and said to them, *"You call me 'Rabbi' and 'Lord', and I am. But if I, your Rabbi and your Lord, wash your feet for you, how much more ought you to wash each other's feet? I have shown you this example so that you will do as I have done."* [58] After he had washed their feet and reclined, he gave them his body and his blood. [They] were not like the Israelites, who were baptized into the cloud and into the sea after eating the Passover sacrifice. As the apostle said, *"All of our fathers were under the cloud, and they all passed through the sea."* [59]

11. I have written to you these few words of persuasion as a response to the Jews, since they observe the time of the Passover feast in transgression of the commandment, with no authority [from scripture]. They make the chest and the ark of the testament, though it has not been commanded. They do not understand the prophet, who said, *"They will not again say 'the ark of the testament of the Lord.' It will not come to mind, nor will they remember it; they will give no command concerning it; nor will it be made again."* [60] Know, my friend,

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[56] Acts 19:3

[57] Acts 1:5. Modern English translations have the passive form: 'you will be baptized'.

[58] John 13:4-15

[59] 1Corinthians 10:1

[60] Jeremiah 3:16

that whoever makes [the ark] transgresses the commandment, since he said that it would not be made again or come to mind or be commanded. Again, Jeremiah said, *"The descendants of Israel and the descendants of Judah have brought my testament to an end."* [61] [God] proclaimed as follows about the testament that was given to the people: *"I will bring to completion a new testament with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. [It will] not be like that testament that I gave their fathers when I took them by their hands and brought them out from the land of Egypt. Since they brought my testament to an end, I too despise them."* [62] They may say, 'He said that he would give a new testament to Israel and to Judah!' The One who called Israel 'rulers of Sodom' and 'people of Gomorrah', however, is He who called Abraham and made a promise to him when he blessed him by saying to him, *"Your name will no longer be Abram. Rather, your name will be Abraham, since I have made you the father of many peoples."* [63] He also said to him, *"All the peoples of the earth will be blessed through your seed."* [64]

12. Since you have been persuaded, you can now persuade the brothers, the members of your congregation who are troubled about the time of the Passover. It is not difficult for those with sound judgement to understand these things. If the day of the Passover sacrifice, which is the suffering of our Saviour, should fall for us on the first [day] of the week, according to the Law we ought to make it [fall] on the second day, so that his whole week might be observed with his suffering and his unleavened bread. For after the Passover there are seven days of unleavened bread, until the twenty-first. If the suffering [of our Saviour] should fall on another one of the days of the week, we are not troubled by these things, since our great day is Friday. And if the calculation is according to the day of the month, the day of the crucifixion (upon which our Saviour suffered, and during whose night-time and day-time was among the dead) is the fifteenth. [He was among the dead] from

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[61] Jeremiah 11:10
[62] Jeremiah 31:31-32
[63] Genesis 17:5
[64] Genesis 22:18

the sixth hour on Friday until the dawn of Sunday, and on Sunday the sixteenth he rose up. For during the dawn of the fourteenth he ate the Passover sacrifice with his disciples according to the Law of Israel, and on that day, which was Friday, the fourteenth, he was judged until the sixth hour, and crucified for three hours. He went down to the place of the dead during the night of the dawn of the fifteenth, and on the Sabbath day, which is the fifteenth, he was among the dead. During the night when Sunday (which is the sixteenth) was dawning, he rose up and was seen by Mary Magdalene[65] and by two of his disciples when he was travelling on the road.[66] Let the one who has become troubled about these days understand: on the dawn of the fourteenth, our Lord offered the Passover sacrifice and ate and drank with his disciples, but from the time that the rooster called he did not eat or drink again, since they seized him and began to judge him. As I explained to you above, on the day of the fifteenth, during its night-time and daytime, he was among the dead.

13. But for us, this is what is required: to observe the festival in its time from season to season, to fast in purity, to pray continually, to give glory [to God] eagerly, to chant psalms when appropriate, to administer the annointing oil as well as baptism in the proper way, to consecrate the holy things in their time and to fulfill all the customary rituals. Our Lord suffered and [then] rose, and will not die again; death has no power over him. He who dies for sin dies one time, and He who lives lives for God,[67] and he has also given those of us who were dead life with him. But if we are troubled by these things, and about the fourteenth alone, let us be diligent, but not [only] about the festival which is from season to season. Rather, let us embrace the observance of the fourteenth of every month, and let us mourn on the Friday of every week. We ought, however, to do good on all the days of the week before the Lord our God. Now, be persuaded by this small [treatise] that I have written to

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[65] John 20:11-18
[66] Luke 24:13-32
[67] Romans 6:9-10

you, for you are not commanded to be troubled by bickering over words, in which there is no profit, but [rather you are commanded to have] a pure heart which observes the commandment[68] and the festival and the times of the observances of [each] day.

The demonstration on the Passover is completed.

[68] The "commandment" that is observed by the pure in heart may be the love command (cf. 1.8; 1.11; 2.12; 14.14; 14.44).

DEMONSTRATION 13: *ON THE SABBATH*

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11 God's 'resting' on the seventh shows how much those who do grow weary need rest from their work
12 further proof that the Sabbath not for salvation: Joshua, the Maccabees, priests not condemned for Sabbath-breaking
13 true Sabbath keepers are those who choose what God desires and who keep their hands from what is evil; God's Sabbath of rest awaits them

II. TRANSLATION

1. With respect to the day of the Sabbath, the Lord gave a command to his servant Moses that the Israelites should keep [it]. He spoke to them as follows: *"You will do your work for six days, but the seventh day, the Sabbath, is a rest holy to the Lord your God, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and the seas and all that is in them, but on the seventh day he stopped and rested. For this reason, God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, since on it he rested from all of the works that he had done."* [1] He admonished them as follows: *"You, your male and female servants, and your oxen and donkey must rest."* Moreover, he admonished them again: *"The hired hand and the foreigner and every grazing animal that labours and toils in servitude must rest."* [2] The Jewish people take pride in and boast about this Sabbath day. They say, 'We live because we keep the Sabbath and [its] tradition[s]!' As much as I am able, my friend, I will give you an explanation in a few words, just as I explained circumcision and the Passover to you.

2. The Sabbath was not placed between death and life, nor between righteousness and sin; rather, it was given for rest. [It was not][3] like the other commandments, which existed so that people might live through them, and if they did not obey them, they would die. At the time when the Sabbath was kept, it was given for the people's rest, and not for humans alone, but also for grazing animals. For He said, *"Your ox and your donkey and every grazing animal of yours must rest."* Now if the Sabbath was placed between death and life and between righteousness and sins, what benefit is there for grazing animals who keep the Sabbath, or what harm will come to them when they do not keep [it]? We can see that on other days, when grazing animals labour and the servitude and labour of work is greater, they are more righteous than [they are] on the day of the Sabbath. On the days of labour grazing animals labour and grow

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[1] Exodus 20:9-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-14

[2] Exodus 23:12; Deuteronomy 5:14

[3] The negation has been added between the lines by another hand. It is hard to see how to make sense of the sentence without it, and all translators have followed this ancient example.

tired with loads and burdens. The oxen pull a yoke, and because they are tired, there is no occasion for them to commit sins. On the day of the Sabbath, however, when the donkeys, oxen, and all [other] grazing animals of various kinds are idle, they are not prevented from copulating with their mothers, sister, and close relatives. But this is not a sin, and they are not blamed for doing these 'sins' on the day of the Sabbath, since this is [simply] the way that grazing animals behave. Be aware that just as there is no sin when a grazing animal is involved in such things, so too there is no righteousness, for the reward of righteousness in the new world, after the coming to life of the dead, will be for whoever does deeds of righteousness. There will be no resurrection for grazing animals, however, in order for a reward for keeping the Sabbath to be given [to them], nor will they be brought to judgement. Just as the Law does not set up another commandment for grazing animals to keep, so too the Sabbath gives them no benefit. The Holy One commanded in his Law, *"Do not commit adultery,"* [4] yet grazing animals commit adultery boldly and fornicate openly. The Law commands and admonishes, *"Anyone who takes his sister, or any other of his close relatives, is cursed,"* [5] yet grazing animals do all these things. Again, it is written, *"Do not kill,"* [6] yet grazing animals, because of their simplicity, will kill their companions and eat their flesh. It is also written, *"You may slaughter and eat anything, but do not eat the blood,"* [7] yet grazing animals certainly lick their own blood, and it is very pleasing to them to eat unclean flesh. If there was any benefit for grazing animals when they kept the Sabbath, the Law [would have] prohibited them these unclean things, and then justified them when they kept the Sabbath.

3. I have written this argument [to show] that the Sabbath was given so that all creatures who grow weary with toil [might find] rest. If it was not given for the sake of rest to every body that

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[4] Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18
[5] Leviticus 20:17
[6] Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17
[7] Deuteronomy 12:15-16

grows weary, it would have been appropriate, from ancient times, for creatures who did not grow weary to also keep the Sabbath, in order to be justified. Yet we see that the sun continues [to move] and the moon travels; stars run and the winds blow; clouds fly and flying creatures continue [to move]; springs luxuriate in their flowing and waves rise up; flashes of lightning run and light up creation; thunder rumbles urgently in its season and trees bring forth fruit; and the growth of everything is strengthened. We see nothing that rests on the Sabbath day, except people and grazing animals, who exist under the servitude of work.

4. If the Sabbath was given for righteousness, then it would have been appropriate for it to be given to Adam, [long] before Israel, so that he might keep it and be justified through it. Then God would not have imposed on him the commandment to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of evil and good, and he would not have died. But since Adam was not given over to work until he transgressed the commandment, the Sabbath was not given to him. [It was only] after he transgressed the commandment that he received the decree of judgement about work and weariness ([which was] that he would work the land as a condemned man and criminal) and that [God] decreed death on him.[8]

5. If righteousness was in the Sabbath, it would have been through it that Enoch and all the generations after him were pleasing [to God].[9] It was not by keeping the Sabbath that Noah was called 'innocent' [and] 'free from sins'. God said to Noah, *'I have*

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[8] The implication here seems to be that Adam did in fact observe the Sabbath after being expelled from paradise. Yet Aphrahat clearly says in section 8 that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob "did not keep the Sabbath", which is followed in section 9 with an argument that God cares for all of his creation. This leaves Aphrahat in a vulnerable position, since he cannot prove that God instituted the Sabbath at the same time that he instituted work (i.e. with Adam).

[9] Genesis 5:22-24; Hebrews 11:5

seen that you are righteous and innocent in this generation," [10] but it was not because he kept the Sabbath that he was justified. Rather, it was because he kept [his] integrity in a corrupt generation, as the meaning of the passage makes known. It is not written that he participated in the world. Noah was five hundred years old when God spoke with him and said, *"I have seen that you are righteous and innocent before me in this generation."* It seems to us that his integrity consisted of this: when he saw that the generation of Seth was mixing with the descendants of Cain,[11] who were cursed, he established in his mind that he would not take a wife and father children, so that they would not be mixed and cursed with the descendants of Cain, the cursed seed. When God saw that his heart was pure and innocent, he wanted a replacement to come from him for the world that he was planning to obliterate because of its wickedness.[12] Then he spoke with him when he was five hundred years old, and said,*"I have seen that you are innocent before me in this generation."* At this point he had no son, for as the meaning [of the passage] makes clear, and as I indicated above, Noah did not take a wife during that whole time up to when God spoke with him and said to him, *"I have seen that you are innocent before me in this generation. Now build a wooden ark for yourself, so that you might be protected by it."* [13] When Noah heard these things (namely, that God had commanded him to build an ark of wood, and said to him, *"I am going to completely obliterate human beings from the face of the earth, since they have corrupted their ways"* [14]), he then, in his five-hundredth year, took a wife from the daughters of Seth, the blessed seed of the righteous. Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japeth, and he warned these three sons of his not to take wives from the daughters of Cain. He gave them wives from the seed of the righteous, so that the seed from them would be preserved on the face of the earth and the world might be established through

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[10] Genesis 7:1
[11] Literally: "the house of Cain"
[12] Cf. Sirach 44:17
[13] The second sentence is from Genesis 6:14.
[14] Genesis 6:7

them. In order for you to know that these things are so, I will give you proof from a calculation of the years.

6. Shem, the firstborn of Noah, had a son, Arpachshad, two years after the deluge.[15] Shem was one hundred years old when he fathered Arpachshad, two years after the deluge. We know from these facts, therefore, that Noah was five hundred and two years old when he fathered Shem. It is understood from this calculation that Noah had not taken a wife before God spoke with him, nor did he take wives for his sons until the time when he went into the ark. For if he had taken a wife in his youth, he would have also fathered children. [He would have been] like Adam, who fathered Seth when he was one hundred and thirty years old; like Seth, who fathered Enosh when he was one hundred and five years old; like Enosh, who fathered Kenan when he was ninety years old; like Kenan, who fathered Mahalalel when he was seventy years old; like Mahalalel, who fathered Jared when he was sixty-five years old; like Jared, who fathered Enoch when he was one hundred and sixty-two years old; like Enoch, who fathered Methuselah when he was sixty-five years old; like Methuselah, who fathered Lamech when he was one hundred and eighty-seven years old; and like Lamech, the father of Noah, who fathered him when he was one hundred and eighty-two years old.

7. If [Noah] had taken a wife before God spoke with him, like his fathers he too would have fathered [children], since sterility did not rule over him. For at that time, the descendants of Adam were blessed so that they would increase and multiply in their offspring, [and] so that the world might be filled with them. Noah, who kept [his] integrity, was not afraid for himself, that he would mix with the cursed seed of the house of Cain. Rather, [his fear was] that when he took a wife and fathered children, his children would transgress the Law and take wives from that seed. But when he saw that God was speaking with him and that he said to him, *"I am oblit-*

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[15] Genesis 11:10

erating human beings from the face of the earth, but I am saving you alone," [16] he then took a wife in order to have seed from which the world might be established [again], and so that he might become the father of the just and the righteous. The Holy Spirit approved him, so that Christ, the Lifegiver of the world, who brings to an end the curses[17] of Adam, might also be born from his seed. He then earnestly took a wife from the blessed seed and fathered Shem, the father of the righteous, in the five hundredth year of his life, and in the second year after God spoke with him. When he had fathered three sons, he began to make the ark, and he admonished his sons not to take wives until the time when they would enter the ark. This was in case children would come to them who would corrupt their ways, and who because of their sins would not be saved from the wrath that was coming. He guarded his sons for ninety-seven years, and took wives for them from the blessed seed of his fathers. Then, in the six hundredth year of the lifetime of Noah, God spoke with him and said, *"You and your wife and your sons and the wives of your sons must [now] enter the ark."* [18] Noah entered the ark when he was six hundred years old. Shem, his son, was ninety seven years old when he entered the ark, and then the deluge came and destroyed the corrupt generation. Noah and his sons were in the ark until they came out twelve months and ten days [later]. A second world came into being from Noah because he kept [his] integrity in a corrupt generation. It was not because he kept the Sabbath or even through circumcision that he was justified, but because of what I have explained to you.

8. From Noah was born Abraham, the faithful man, head of the righteous, who kept the Law though the Law had not been imposed on him. He fathered Isaac, the son of the promise, and Jacob, the head of the people.[19] These righteous fathers did not

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[16] Genesis 7:1

[17] A has "curse"

[18] Genesis 7:1, 13

[19] The notion of 'fathering' is broader in scope than a single generation.

keep the Sabbath, but they were justified through faith, as it is written, *"Abraham believed in God and it was credited to him as righteousness."*[20] Isaac and Jacob, his sons, also conducted themselves according to the commandment and the law of their father,[21] and they were justified through faith and not through the Sabbath. In the midst of the land of Egypt, Joseph was not justified for his uprightness because he kept the Sabbath. When the wife of his master set her eyes on him so that he might do an unclean thing with her, he said to his mistress, *"How can I do this great evil and sin before God?"* [22] [It was] through this that Joseph was justified, and not through the Sabbath.

9. If it was between death and life, and between wickedness and righteousness, the Sabbath would have been given to these righteous [men], whose names I mentioned above, so that they might keep [it] and live. It was for this reason, however, that the Sabbath was given to be kept: so that male and female servants, hired hands, foreigners, and grazing animals incapable of speech might rest, so that [all] those who grow tired from work might rest. God cares for all of his creation and for [every] living creature, including grazing animals, flying creatures,[23] and wild animals. When he recited the Law to the people, Moses said, *"For six years you will seed your land and gather its harvest, but in the seventh year you must plough it and leave it, so that the poor among your people can eat. The wild animals will eat the rest."* [24] Concerning the flying creatures, too, the Holy One commanded through Moses his servant as follows: *"When you find the nest of a small bird in any tree or on the ground, and the mother and its children or chicks are in it, and the mother is protecting the children or chicks, do not take the mother together with her children, but let the mother fly away and take the children for yourself. Because of these things, the* Lord *your God*

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[20] Genesis 15:6
[21] Genesis 18:19
[22] Genesis 39:9
[23] *B* omits "and for…flying creatures"
[24] Exodus 23:10-11

will bless you." [25] David said, *"He nourishes the children of the raven who call to Him."* [26] And again David said, *"You, Lord, save [both] humans and grazing animals."* [27] Furthermore, Job said, *"Who has released the wild donkey into freedom and rescued it from its yoke, so that it has made its home in the plain and its dwelling in the place of salt?"*[28] Again, Job said, *"He prepares food for the children of the eagle."* [29] And [David], while considering the flying creatures and the grazing animals, said, *"All of them wait for You to give them food in its season. You give to them and they are nourished; you open your hand, and they are satisfied. But if you turn your face away, they are afraid."* [30] Furthermore, Isaiah said, *"There the hawks gather, one with another. [The Lord] commanded with his mouth, his Spirit gathered them, and his hand marked out for them the lines of [their] property."* [31] See from these things that God cares for all of his creation, and nothing is forgotten by him. For this reason, he admonished and commanded that there should be rest [on] the Sabbath day.

10. Listen again to what [scripture] says: *"In six days God made heaven and earth, and [then] he stopped and rested from all of his works. For this reason God blessed the seventh day and made it holy."* [32] What should we say about this, that God 'rested' on the seventh day? Listen and I will explain this matter to you. God certainly did not grow weary from the activity of [those] six days; [it was not] because of weariness that he rested on the seventh day. Far be it from us to say that God grew weary! The meaning of the passage, rather, is this: God finished all of his works in six days, and he stopped on the seventh day from all the works that he had done. Listen to the [following] proof that God did not grow weary. David said, *"The Guardian of*

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[25] Deuteronomy 22:6-7
[26] Psalm 146:9
[27] Psalm 36:6
[28] Job 39:5-6
[29] Job 39:30; 38:41
[30] Psalm 104:27-29
[31] Isaiah 34:15-17
[32] Genesis 2:1-3

Israel does not slumber or sleep," [33] and whoever does not slumber or sleep does not grow weary either. Isaiah said to the Israelites, *"Thus says the Lord: Because the thought 'God is not really able to save us' has entered your mind*… (he spoke to them through Isaiah)… *[I ask you:] has my hand reaped the harvest and missed the mark? Do I not have the power to deliver [you]?" By my rebuke I dry up the sea; I make rivers become like wilderness, and their fish rot from lack of water and die. I clothe the heavens with darkness and make sackcloth their covering.*[34] *Just as I dried up the Red Sea in the days of your fathers, and made a passage through the Jordan for them to cross over, so too now my hand is able to save you. But because of your sins, you have been sold, and because of your wickedness, your mother was divorced.*[35] *Though I do not grow weary, you have wearied me."* As the prophet Malachi says, *"You have wearied the Lord by your words."* [36]

11. Listen and be persuaded that God did not grow weary or labour to create all of his works, for it says, *"The heavens were made by the word of the Lord, and all their hosts by the breath of his mouth."* [37] Adam alone he made with his hands, but it is not written that he grew weary when he made him. When he made all of his creatures by the word of his mouth, he spoke and they came into existence, without labour or weariness [on his part]. This is how to understand [the statement] that God stopped all his activity, and that God rested on the seventh day: if God, who does not grow weary, stopped and rested from his activity, how much more appropriate is it for the one under the [burden] of labour and servitude to rest! Isaiah also spoke about God as follows: *"He does not grow weary or sleep, and his understanding cannot be investigated."* [38] In another passage, because of the sins of the people, [God] said, *"You have subdued me by your wickedness, and wearied me by your sins."* [39] See how it is sometimes written

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[33] Psalm 120:4
[34] Isaiah 50:2-3
[35] Isaiah 50:1
[36] Malachi 2:17
[37] Psalm 33:6
[38] Isaiah 40:28
[39] Isaiah 43:24

that [God] does not grow weary or sleep, yet because of their wickedness he said to them, *"You have subdued me and wearied me."* All these words are well-written, and are understood with conviction by the wise. As the apostle said, *"The Law is good, if a person reads it with conviction."* [40] The prophet also said, *"The ways of the Lord are straight. The wicked stumble on them, but the righteous travel and walk easily on them."* [41] This [idea] that God rested from his works (which is understood by fools [to mean] that he grew weary) is similar to the [time] when he wanted to obliterate humans because of their sins, which were many, [and] he said, *"I regret that I made them."* [42] Listen to the apostle, however, who said, *"If this is so, how will God judge the world?"* [43]

12. Listen, my friend, and I will explain the Sabbath to you, just as I have explained circumcision to you, in which the people of Israel[44] boast in vain. With respect to the Sabbath, too, be persuaded that it is in vain that they take pride in keeping it. Joshua son of Nun did not allow them to rest on the Sabbath when he was making war against Jericho,[45] as the illustrious apostle said, *"If Joshua son of Nun had given them rest, the day of the Sabbath would not have been spoken of again. Now, therefore, the Sabbath of God remains."* [46] Furthermore, when the enemies of the Maccabees came against them to make war with them on the day of the Sabbath, they wanted to keep the Sabbath in accordance with the Law. But when they kept it, their enemies came against them on the Sabbath and destroyed many of them. When they saw that [their enemies] were plotting against them, so that when they were keeping the Sabbath they would fight with them again, they profaned the Sabbath and made war on it

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[40] 1Timothy 1:8
[41] Hosea 14:9
[42] Genesis 6:7
[43] Romans 3:6
[44] A: "the people of the Jews"
[45] Joshua 6:15
[46] Hebrews 4:8-9

and conquered their enemies.[47] They were not faulted for breaking the Sabbath, nor were they the only ones who broke the Sabbath. The priests in the temple also profaned the Sabbath without sinning. On the day of the Sabbath they would present offerings, slaughter, skin, chop wood, and kindle fire, but they were not faulted for breaking the Sabbath since it was commanded that they do these things. If the priests, who warned the people [to avoid] sins, were profaning the Sabbath one would expect it to be in an unworthy place, but it was in the place where all the sins were atoned for! Yet they did not act foolishly, nor were [these things] sins for them. Why do [the Jews] take great pride in keeping the Sabbath, when it was given for rest, as I explained to you?

13. Listen concerning the Sabbath in which God takes pleasure. Isaiah said to them, *"This is my rest: give rest to those who are troubled."* [48] He also said, *"Those who keep the Sabbath without profaning it are those who are strengthened in my covenant and who choose what I desire."* [49] He speaks to those who do not profane the Sabbath and promises to give to them. He said, *"In my house, and within my [city] wall, I will give to them a name that is better than 'sons' or 'daughters'."* [50] The Sabbath is no benefit, therefore, to the wicked or murderers or thieves, but [only] to those who choose what God desires and who keep their hands from what is evil. God lives in them and dwells in them, as he said, *"I will dwell in them and walk with them."* [51] In the days of Isaiah they kept the Sabbath, but their behaviour was that of the deeds of the unclean peoples. They were performing the deeds of Sodom and Gomorrah, yet they were saying to the peoples, *"Stay away! I am holy!"* [52] Because of these things, Isaiah said, *"These [people] will become smoke in my wrath, and a fire that burns all day."* [53] He

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[47] 1Maccabees 2:29-44
[48] Isaiah 28:12
[49] Isaiah 56:2
[50] Isaiah 56:4-5
[51] Leviticus 26:12; 2Corinthians 6:16
[52] Isaiah 65:5
[53] Isaiah 65:5

took them captive and expelled them from his land and scattered them among all the peoples, since they did not keep the rest of God, but kept the Sabbath in a physical way. We, however, will keep the Sabbath of God (namely, whatever gives rest to his will), so that we might enter into [that] Sabbath of rest in which heaven and earth keep Sabbath and all creatures stop and rest. There will be no fleeing there, as our Saviour said, *"May your fleeing not be in winter or on the Sabbath!"* [54] And the apostle said, *"The Sabbath of God remains."* [55] I have written this brief argument for you about the Sabbath, against those who boast because of it.

The demonstration on the Sabbath is completed.

[54] Matthew 24:20
[55] Hebrews 4:9

DEMONSTRATION 14: *AN ARGUMENT IN RESPONSE TO DISSENSION*[1]

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15 the earth is preserved by God's love and by the righteous
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    17-18 priests who reject the Law are rejected from the priesthood
    19 Moses and Jesus warn against distractions
    20 results of neglecting the Law and ministry: Israel defeated, the ark captured

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[1] The title reads simply "an argument" (ܡܡܪܐ), but I have added the author's own designation from 22.25.

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43 jealousy and strife allow the Evil One to infiltrate a person's mind and heart

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45 God's messengers are often rejected: the author and his supporters will not be discouraged
46 the parable of the sower: not all seeds are received
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50 date of writing and closing benediction

II. TRANSLATION

1. The idea took hold of all of us when we were gathered together to write this letter to all the brothers, members of the Church in various places: bishops, elders, deacons, and the whole Church of God, together with all her children in various places who are near us. To our beloved brothers and friends, bishops, priests, and deacons, together with all the children of the Church who are with you, and all the people of God who are in Seleucia-Ctesiphon and in various places, in our Lord and God and Lifegiver, who has given us life through Christ and brought us near to himself: abundant peace!

2. We are instructing you, our brothers and friends, (and while we instruct you we are also reminding ourselves), concerning what has happened in our days with respect to our sins, which have multiplied and grown strong and bitter. Our intelligences have become dark, without understanding, and we do not watch over ourselves, that God might turn to us, as it says in the prophet: *"Return to me and I will return to you."*[2] Hosea also said, *"Take words with you and return to the Lord."*[3] And Isaiah said, *"Seek the Lord, and call on him while*

[2] Zechariah 1:3
[3] Hosea 14:3

you can find him, and while he is near let the sinner forsake his way, and the evil man his opinion." [4] Again it is written, *"If you seek the Lord he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you."* [5] And in David it is written, *"The Lord looked down from heaven to see if there was anyone with understanding and who sought God, but all of them together have turned away and have been rejected. There is no one who does what is good, not even one."* [6] And Jeremiah said, *"I sought for a man who would repair the fence and stand in the gap for the sake of the land, so that I would not destroy it. But I did not find [one]."* [7] Again, Jeremiah's Lord said to him, *"Go and speak to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: 'For how long will you not receive instruction?'"* [8] And again it says in the prophet, *"I called you, but you did not respond.*[9] *You will cry out in my hearing with a loud voice, but I will not listen to you."* [10] Again it is written, *"There is no one who is sorry for his sins, and who says, 'What have I done?'"* [11]

3. There have arisen leaders among our people who have forsaken the Law and have adorned themselves with evil. They have acquired possessions, and greed has conquered them. They have lent at interest and demanded advance interest, and none [of them] remembers that it is written, *"Do not take a prepayment [of interest] or a profit,"* [12] and, *"Whoever wishes to live in the tent of the Lord does not lend money at interest."* [13] Again it says, *"Whoever does not take interest, nor lend with prepaid interest,"* [14] and not doing one of those abominable things that Ezekiel recounts: in such a person God delights. There are at this time men who lead through coercion[15] and pervert jus-

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[4] Isaiah 55:6-7
[5] 2Chronicles 15:2
[6] Psalm 53:2-3
[7] Not from Jeremiah, but Ezekiel 22:30
[8] Jeremiah 35:13
[9] Jeremiah 7:13
[10] Ezekiel 8:18
[11] Jeremiah 8:6
[12] Leviticus 25:36
[13] Psalm 15:1, 5
[14] Ezekiel 18:8
[15] *B* omits "through coercion"

tice. They are respecters of persons, [who] declare innocent the guilty, and condemn the innocent. They love riches and hate the poor. They feed themselves and scatter the flock. The world has regard for them. They love bribes, excommunicate truth, hate admonition, and love impiety. They hate the humble but love those who are haughty, proud, and boastful. In their days the light has grown dim, the salt has lost its flavour, doctrine has been obscured, and the Law has grown cold. The vineyard has been devastated and thorns have grown up. People have fallen asleep and the Evil One has sown his weeds. The waves have swollen and the storm has gained in strength. The chariot drivers have fallen and the chariots have been disturbed. The sailors have fallen asleep during the sinking of their ships. The Law is bound and the testimony is silenced, and the priest has become like the people.[16] The governor asks for gold, the judge says 'Bring a gift!', and the nobleman speaks for his own pleasure. They treat the poor[17] with contempt and exterminate the oppressed of the land. *"They bite with their teeth while preaching peace, and proclaim war against anyone who does not put [food] in their mouths. They despise justice and pervert all uprightness. They build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with wickedness. Its rulers give judgement for a bribe, and its priests teach for a price. The prophets perform divinations for money, yet are confident in the Lord, saying, 'The Lord is with us!' Because of this, night [will overtake] them, and it will become dark for them, without revelation."* [18] They are full of anger and breathe out wrath. They love mockery and take delight in slippery places. Their conversation among themselves is pleasant, as a man might eat honey and lick the honeycomb. Truth has been weighed in the balance and admonition has fled; honourable people have gone away. Teachers are treated with contempt. *"They call what is good evil and what is evil good. They declare the light to be darkness and the darkness to be light. They call bitter what is sweet and sweet what is bitter. They are wise in their own eyes and consider themselves intelligent. They declare innocent a guilty man because of his bribe, and*

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[16] See Hosea 4:9 and Isaiah 24:2
[17] *B* omits "the poor"
[18] Micah 3:5, 9-11, 6

the righteousness of the innocent they take away." [19] Visions hasten away and prophecy is obscured.

4. We have done these things, and these things have happened to us. We have been plundered and persecuted and dispersed. Those who were not inclined to give are asking us to give to them generously. Because we hated each other, those who hate us have multiplied freely. Because we mocked, we have been mocked. Because we despised, we have been despised. Because we lied we have been deceived. Because we exalted ourselves we have been humbled. Because we have oppressed, we have been oppressed. Because we took advantage we have been defrauded. Friends! [Certain] men among us have walked in these [ways], not judging with justice or seeking righteousness. And there is no one who remembers the prophet, who said, *"Seek justice, and do good for the oppressed."* [20]

5. For God, in the multitude of his mercies, has given assurance to people in every age when they have gone astray, and has dealt justly with humankind. Though he is sovereign, he does not govern through coercion. For Isaiah the prophet said, *"The Lord stands to judge; he stands to judge his people. The Lord enters into judgement with the elders and princes of his people, because they have consumed the vineyards and collected the spoil of the poor, and have conquered and humiliated the weak."* [21] And Jeremiah said, *"I will enter into judgement with you, says the Lord, as I entered into judgement with your forefathers."* [22] And Micah said, *"The Lord enters into judgement with his people and rebukes Israel."* [23] And Isaiah said, *"Set forth your case, says the Lord, and present your opinions, says the King of Jacob."* [24] Moses said to Israel, *"Appoint judges and scribes for yourselves in all your tribes, and the judges will render just decisions*

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[19] Isaiah 5:20, 21, 23
[20] Isaiah 1:17
[21] Isaiah 3:13-15
[22] Not Jeremiah but Ezekiel 20:36
[23] Micah 6:2
[24] Isaiah 41:21

for the people. Do not accept bribes and do not be hypocritical, but listen to the small and the great so that the Lord may bless you." [25] Furthermore, in the case of the terrible[26] judgement of Sodom, the Spirit of our God was very longsuffering, and he demonstrated his love to Abraham when he said to him, "[This] judgement was not carried out in anger." And he also explained to Ezekiel (in the Spirit) concerning the severe judgement which took place when the destroyer came forth to destroy Jerusalem. The prophet had begun to reproach [God]: *"Why are you bringing destruction on all who remain from Israel?"* [27] He gave an explanation when he showed him the defilement of twenty men, and that prophet was convinced that it was right that the evildoers were receiving punishment. And he explained to Jonah the growth of the gourd, when he was concerned that it had withered,[28] and he said to him, *"You are concerned about the young gourd plant. It grew up in one night and withered in one night. But should I not be concerned about Nineveh, the great city in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand people, besides*[29] *young children and newborns who do not know their right from their left, and many animals?"* [30] And again, when he wanted to uproot his vineyard because it yielded carob instead of grapes, he placed under judgement the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and said, *"Judge between me and my vineyard."* [31]

6. Take notice, my friends, of the compassion of our good Creator: though in anger he causes the wicked to be lost, he delivers and sets free the innocent. For he destroyed the generation of the days of Noah because they acted wickedly, but he saved Noah and his household because they loved him. He ruined Sodom and her neighbours, but delivered Lot from the midst of the destruction.

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[25] Deuteronomy 16:18, 19; 1:17
[26] A omits "terrible"
[27] Ezekiel 9:8; 11:13
[28] *B*: "when he was concerned about Ninevah"
[29] A omits "besides"
[30] Jonah 4:10-11
[31] Isaiah 5:3

Likewise, in Egypt, while he killed the firstborn of the Egyptians, he kept alive the firstborn of the Israelites. And in the days of Ezekiel when he destroyed the city, he set a mark between the eyes of the righteous men, and delivered them. God does not destroy unjustly.

7. Today, however, there are found among our[32] people wise judges in whom there is foreknowledge, who judge and convict before they enter into judgement with people! Even more amazing is the fact that although foreknowledge is in them, they do not, in their judgements, condemn only those who can tell their right from their left, but also infants, and many embryos which are still in the wombs of their mothers and not yet born. [They also condemn] the poor, the oppressed, and the holy covenant, many myriads [of people].

8. Among you, our brothers, is found one who has tied on a diadem, but his country is not aware of him. His country does not wish to receive him. He has drawn near to other kings who are distant from him, and has sought chains and fetters from them, and has begun to distribute them to his country and his city. We believe that instead of the chains which this king who tied on a diadem sought from his neighbouring kings, it would have been appropriate if he had sought gifts from them, instead of chains and fetters, and distributed [them] to his princes and the citizens of his country and his city. Let the wise person hear and understand. This is why we have written these things, my friends. For a king tied on a diadem in the midst of his city, and surrounded by his princes he received the kingdom. All of them elected him. Then he went to the treasury and took many presents and gifts and distributed them to all his princes. He procaimed an amnesty in all his kingdom, and shook off the chains in all the prisons in his jurisdiction. He set the captives free and released the prisoners, and he soothed the distressed because he had recently received the kingdom. At that time they believed that he would be strengthened in his rule, and be-

[32] *B*: "my"

come king over all the people. But this offence is more evil than [that of] Rehoboam, and these judges are more youthful in understanding than Rehoboam's young counsellors.

9. Listen, friends![33] Suppose a great king appoints a steward over all his possessions and his entire household, and that steward foolishly goes out and raises himself above his friends, and exalts himself over the servants of the king, and without trial or charges siezes and imprisons them, and beats them and dishonours them. The judge does not investigate and does not know if they are guilty or innocent, but from the dungeon and the prison the servants complain and inform their master: 'This steward of yours, our colleague, has imprisoned us though we are innocent. He did not bring us to court or interrogate us or make any accusations.' What do you say to this, brothers? Will his master shower praise upon this steward? This we know: the king will throw out the steward who imprisoned his friends without bringing them to court and used his power to dishonour them. As he did to his friends, so it will be done to him. For the King wrote to us as follows: *"You will be judged as you have judged [others]."* [34] He also exhorted and warned them and said, *"Take note of what you hear. You will be judged as you judge [others]."* [35]

10. Pride and boasting has defeated many. Because of his pride Adam went out from paradise, and dust became nourishment for the serpent. Because of his pride Cain killed his brother,[36] and was trembling and shaking on the ground. Because Ham was proud and insulted his father he was cursed and became a servant of servants for his brothers.[37] And Esau, because of his pride, lost the blessing of the firstborn.[38] Pharoah, because he was hardened and proud,

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[33] A: "friend"
[34] Matthew 7:2
[35] Mark 4:24; Matthew 7:2
[36] Genesis 4:8
[37] Genesis 9:20-27
[38] Genesis 25:29-34

sank in the Sea of Reeds, he and his army.[39] And the sons of Eli the priest, because they exalted themselves over the people, were rejected from the holy priesthood.[40] Goliath the Philistine, who with his boasting faced David, was humiliated and ashamed, and he fell through his pride.[41] Abimelech, son of Gideon, exalted himself over his brothers and killed them, [but] the curse of his brother Yotham came upon him.[42] And Absalom, who was proud and took the kingdom by force, fell and was humbled before the servants of David.[43] Adonijah son of Haggith, who had stolen the kingdom, did not retain [it] nor prosper through his pride.[44] And [then there was] Ahithophel, counsellor of vice, whose pride was humbled by his own hands.[45] And Rehoboam, the son of Nebat, a servant of Solomon, who created division among the people, became an evil memory in Israel.[46] Greed for the inheritance [of Naboth] at Jezreel overcame Ahab son of Omri, and he received punishment.[47] And the king of Edom, who went up against Ahab, did not find that the one who fastens [on armour] is like the one who loosens [armour].[48] Haman, who exalted himself over Mordecai, received punishment on the gallows, he and his sons.[49] And [as for] the Babylonians who slandered Daniel, the lions ground their bones into powder.[50] Judas, who betrayed our Saviour, fell into the sea with a millstone around his neck.[51] Their pride humbled all of these people, as

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[39] Exodus 14:27-28
[40] 1Samuel 2:12-17
[41] 1Samuel 17:48-51
[42] Judges 9
[43] 2Samuel 18:9-15
[44] 1Kings 2:13-25
[45] 2Samuel 17:23
[46] 1Kings 2:26-40
[47] 1Kings 21:22-23
[48] 1Kings 20:11 (refers to Aram, not Edom)
[49] Esther 7:10
[50] Daniel 6:25
[51] Matthew 18:6; 27:5; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2

it is written, *"A person's pride will bring humiliation, but the one whose spirit is humble will multiply honour to himself."* [52]

11. Take note, my friends, that in each age and in each generation God has given great victories through wise people, that they might reconcile and bring peace to divisions, and this not through men only, but also through women.[53] Through the instruction of Joab, the woman of Tekoa reconciled Absolam with David.[54] And by means of a woman peace came to Israel when Shamu son of Bakri rebelled against David. A wise woman spoke from the wall with Joab and said, *"Listen Joab, listen!' And he said, 'I am listening.' She said to Joab, 'They used to say in former days, 'They inquired of the prophets, and then they brought an end [to a matter].' Am I the one to pay Israel's penalty? You are seeking to destroy a handmaiden and a mother of Israel.' Joab said to her, 'Far be it from me! I will not destroy or ruin; this is not the way things are. But there is a man, Shamu son of Bakri, who has raised his hand against King David. Give him to us and he will go with us.' And she said to him, 'Soon his head will be thrown to you from the wall.' She went and spoke with all the people, and she cut off the head of Shamu son of Bakri and threw it from the wall to Joab."* [55] Thus peace came to Israel through a woman. Deborah was a mother who administered justice in Israel. And Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, cut off and cast away the glory[56] of Sisera, the leader of the army of Jabir, king of Hazor, when she drove a stake into his head.[57] These Kenites were of the house of the father-in-law of Moses, and Balaam son of Beor said to them in a prophecy, *"Your dwelling place is strong, and your nest in set in the*

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[52] Proverbs 29:23

[53] Cf. section 33. The contrast between this section and 6.3 and 6.6, where women are described as instruments of Satan, is striking. Either the text has been interpolated, or, more likely, Aphrahat simply felt the need to qualify his earlier statements. Demonstration 14 was written about 8 years after demonstration 6, so he would have had time to think about (and receive feedback on) what he had said previously.

[54] 2Samuel 14:1-24

[55] 2Samuel 20:16-22

[56] A: "cut off and extinguished the might and the boasting"

[57] Judges 4:17-21

cliff." [58] And Rebecca, the mother of the righteous, established peace between Esau and Jacob when she sent Jacob to be with Laban.[59] Our Saviour, the Great King who has reconciled a rebellious world to his Father, while we were wrong-doers carried the wrong-doing of all of us and became an ambassador of reconciliation between God and his creation. While we were wrong-doers and rebels he sought us out so that we might be reconciled to him, as the apostle said, *"He became an ambassador of reconciliation, and he reconciled us to his Father."* [60] It is fitting that we who have gone astray and have sinned should ask and make supplication, and he will reconcile us with our Father. He sought us out so that we might be reconciled to him. For it was he who became the innkeeper of evil; he allowed the punishment for evil to be placed on [his] head.

12. Through the suggestion that the serpent gave to Eve, Adam went out from paradise, which was a severe and difficult [punishment] placed on [the serpent's] head. He had received his food from [Adam], but [now] he gave him dust. He fell on the ground and went around on his belly. He caused himself to be without feet, which he had injured while attacking Adam. He eats dust all his days and forever because he led Eve astray through food. He sets himself up as an adversary, and gives his head to be trampled. In the image of the serpent who deceived Adam, people have arisen among us who are misleading, disturbing, evil, rash, deceptive, and unjust. They build injustice and pull down righteousness; they plant impiety and uproot goodness; they let weeds grow and destroy the wheat; they accuse the righteous and bless the wicked; they love the proud and hate the humble; they praise and confirm liars; they despise those who tell the truth and accuse them of lying. They pour forth iniquity and make peace with deception; they conceive and give birth to words of corruption; their tongues turn and they speak vanity. They are empty of goodness but bloated with

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[58] Numbers 24:21
[59] Genesis 27:43-46
[60] 2Corinthians 5:18

falsehood; there is no fruit in them to eat, for they are infected with the venom of the serpent.

13. What advantage is there in strife, and what use is jealousy to those who create it? [Strife] separated Cain from Abel, who loved him.[61] Indeed, it was strife that cursed Cain, sold Joseph, brought Pharoah to an end, banished Jacob, devoured Korah and destroyed his companions, killed Zimri, stoned Achan, did away with Elma,[62] overthrew Sisera, destroyed Nabin, troubled Saul, blotted out Goliath, trampled Amalek, threw Absalom into a pit, disturbed Adonijah, caused Jereboam to sin and divided the people, destroyed Gibeah and massacred its inhabitants, confused Sennacherib and wiped out his camp, brought shame upon Haman, mocked the slanderers, and uprooted Israel and scattered her among the nations. Jealousy and strife have destroyed all these people.

14. Let us return to our Saviour, who said to us, *"This is my commandment: love one another."* [63] And the apostle said, *"Do not be in debt to any person, except the debt of love one to another."* [64] He praised love abundantly and said, *"If I do all that is good and beautiful, but love is not in me, I am nothing."* [65] Love covers up what is ugly; love erases sins; love is far away from boasting; love is weaned from pride; love is separated from strife; love rises above jealousy; love is higher than division; love knows nothing of greed; love is a stranger to mockery; love is free from wickedness. The fruits of love are pleasing, desirable, beautiful, and honourable. Love saved Noah from the flood and delivered Rahab from the sword of Joshua. It lifted David up and wiped out his sins. Love rescued Hezekiah from the

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[61] Syr. ܚܒܝܒܗ . The same word is used throughout by Aphrahat to refer to his correspondent: "my friend". Yet here something stronger is called for.

[62] Syr. ܚܠܡܝܗ . Both Parisot and Pierre associate this name with King Horam of Gezer (see Joshua 10:33).

[63] John 15:12

[64] Romans 13:8

[65] 1Corinthians 13:2

hands of his enemies. It justified Asa and pardoned Josiah. Love extinguished the fire of the furnace before Hananiah and his brothers in the land of Babylon. It raised up Daniel from the pit, and saved Esther and Mordecai from the hand of Haman. Love conquers hatred, blots out sins, stays far from wickedness,[66] removes jealousy, brings an end to strife, destroys enmity, calms those who are angry, and breaks the snares of evil. The lovers of love are many, and its kindness overflows. Love endures reproach; love suffers abuse; love is patient. Love reconciles enemies and raises up peace among those who are divided. Love suffers wrong. Love delights in silence. It loves the humble. It loves the poor. It loves the wise. Love embraces prayer. It takes delight in the righteous and the innocent. Love delights in those who are straightforward and honest. It loves those who repent. It loves those who make peace. Love shows compassion, cares, gathers together, draws near, encourages, and makes glad. When it is treated shamefully, love overcomes its inclination [to fight back]. Rather, it waits, restful and quiet, and endures the wrong [committed against it]. Love does not take pleasure in anger, nor does it rejoice over division. Jealousy is not pleasing to it. [Love] does not become anxious about what the day holds, nor does it worry about the years [to come]. Love is longsuffering and gentle, and its mind is patient and open. Its thought is wide-ranging and its senses are at peace. Love does not insult, does not blame, does not mock, does not swagger, does not boast, does not exalt itself, does not raise itself up. Love sees itself and knows its own appearance. Love draws [people] out while remaining silent and patient. It loves every person, and is loved by every person. Love engenders tranquility [and] gives birth to peace. It turns its attention to good things [and] meditates on that which is beautiful. Love is not defeated by that which is evil. Love is light; love is salt; love is the source of good things. Love is the good seal, the finest pearl and treasure. The seal of everyone is love. It meditates on wisdom and its deliberations are pleasant. Love is a sound intelligence and an excellent thought. Love is the meaning of

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[66] A: "blots out wickedness, stays far from sins"

hope.[67] Love is a perfect mind and a trustworthy conscience. Whoever possesses love is blessed, and in him are perfected lovely fruits. For love is far from discord, which is a threat to peace.

15. O Eternal King! We worship you, for your love continues toward your whole creation. All the works of darkness cease before you, and you know the thoughts of all people. Many deny you though they receive sustenance from you; they refuse to recognize your works. Your goodness is such that your love remains with human beings, and you do not judge us, nor accuse us, nor condemn us before your Law. Your kindness does not hold back from evildoers. You make your sun rise, your rain fall, and your wind blow. You nourish and support; you enrich and bring solace. Those who are evil remain alongside those who are good in the world, the tares together with the wheat, sinners together with the righteous, the guilty together with the innocent. Because of the wheat the weeds are preserved until the harvest, and because of those who are good evildoers are left until the end. Because of the upright the wicked remain until the last day, and because of the righteous unbelievers are not condemned until the judgement. For if ten righteous people had been found the five fortified cities would have been saved on their account,[68] and it was because of Lot that Zoar was not destroyed.[69] And in the days of Jeremiah, if someone had been found to stand in the gap and repair the wall,[70] then perhaps Jerusalem would not have been ruined, just as Moses stood in the gap for his people,[71] and Joshua son of Nun repaired the wall, and Hezekiah raised up prayer,[72] and Asa offered intercession,[73] and

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[67] Or "the mind of hope"

[68] Genesis 18:32

[69] Genesis 19:20-22

[70] Ezekiel 22:30

[71] Psalm 106:23; Owens (1989) has shown that the phrase "for his people" is from the Peshitta version of Sirach 45:23.

[72] 2Kings 19:14-19; 2Chronicles 32:20

[73] 2Chronicles 14:10

Josiah purified the land,[74] and Daniel caused the captives to return, and Mordecai demonstrated heroism, and each one of the righteous in their time stood in the gap for his people, offered intercession, and satisfied the compassion of God.

16. At the present time, who is the wise physician who will stand in the gap and repair the wall? He is the one who also fulfills for us the word of the prophet, when he reproached the false prophets of his people and said to them, *"Your prophets, O Israel, have been like foxes among ruins. You have not gone up to the gap and have not repaired the wall for the people of Israel."* [75] Blessed is the wise doctor who has obtained remedies and who will labour for the sick. The brave sentinel will warn the people about the sword which is unsheathed. The successful athlete will be victorious in the struggle, and will not fail in the struggle. The wise architect[76] digs his foundation deep so that his building will not fall from the waves.[77] The successful farmer gathers his harvest in the summer, so that he will not be in need in the winter. The doorkeeper is vigilant, so as to not be conquered by sleep; when his master knocks, he immediately opens the door.[78] The farsighted merchant will sell his possessions in order to buy the pearl and grow rich. The captain who stays awake will keep watch over his boat, so that his ship will not sink and his merchandise be lost. The wise chariot driver will make sure his chariot is in good repair, so that he will not fall and be scorned. The famous athlete will compete in the stadium to avoid losing his wreath and becoming a laughing-stock to his friends. The good steward will take care of his fellow servants, and will not say in his heart, *"My master is taking a long time to come."* [79] Hired labourers will work hard in the vineyard, so that when they show their faces[80] they might be

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[74] 2Chronicles 34:3
[75] Ezekiel 13: 4-5
[76] Cf. 10:9
[77] Matthew 5:24-25
[78] Luke 12:36
[79] Matthew 24:48; Luke 12:45
[80] Literally: "when their faces are revealed", presumably to the pay-

requested to work more.[81] The groomsmen will prepare their garments, so that when their master comes they might go to his wedding feast. Those who provide for the poor will dissipate their wealth and send their treasures to the country which is before them. Peacemakers will extinguish strife, so that they will be considered worthy to be the children of the Father who is in heaven. Those who blow the trumpet will warn the people, so that no soul that is taken into their hands will seek revenge. The prisoners of the congregation[82] will remain in the fortress and wait in silence, because [their] reward stands [firm]. The keepers of the keys will open to those who enter, lest the door of the kingdom is shut in their faces. Those who are dead to the world and who abstain from pleasures will fast from the world and all its perils.[83] Those who have been born of water and saved by the precious blood guard themselves against the fire and outer darkness. Those who wear the breastplate arm themselves bravely,[84] lest they become a laughingstock to all their friends. Those who wait for the trumpet-blast will prepare their lamps, lest they find themselves in need like the foolish virgins. Those who build a tower will consider its costs, lest they become the sport of those who pass by on the road. Successful shepherds will inspect their flocks, so as to receive a reward from the Chief Shepherd. Those who receive money will show a profit, lest with the wicked servants they go out into the darkness. Those of a sound mind will strip off weakness, and are not afraid of storms or waves which rise up. Those invited to a wedding feast will prepare a gift and put on [good] clothes, that they might be counted worthy by the Bridegroom. Those who take up the yoke will endure scorn. The wise virgins will prepare their lamps.

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master (cf. 22.18)

[81] Matthew 20:10

[82] Cf. 14.38

[83] 'Fasting from the world' should probably be taken as another way of expressing the comprehensive fast mentioned in 3.1.

[84] A: "those who wear the breastplate bravely are victorious"

17. Friends! Our souls will march along with work and weariness, vigils and intercession, fasting[85] and prayer and mournful supplication, lest we are immediately taken from this world and condemned by the righteous judgement of God. For we will not neglect the ministry of the Holy One, lest we are rejected by him, as it says in the prophet, *"Because you have rejected the Law of God, I will reject you from the priesthood."* [86] Again it is written, *"I will honour those who honour me, but the one who despises me will be treated with contempt."* [87]

18. Observe what punishment these priests who despised his ministry received: Nadab and Abihu - holy priests wearing the ephod and clothed in the breastplate of the High Priest, girded with fine white linen, adorned in purple, wearing crowns and mitres and turbans, receiving offerings and atoning for Israel, teaching the people and sanctifying the community - when a little blindness of mind and heart came upon them and they neglected the ministry of the Holy One, and they brought strange fire, which was not at a proper time, fire blazed from their censers and consumed them. They removed [their bodies] and sent them outside the camp. And it was not only Nadab and Abihu [who transgressed], but also Hophni and Phineas the sons of Eli the priest, for they honoured themselves more than the ministry which was appointed them. They greedily received portions [of food] from the people and abused the women who were praying in the tabernacle. Their father Eli did not angrily and vigorously rebuke them, but [only] slackly and feebly accused them when he heard from all the people, who were outraged because [his sons] were behaving wickedly as priests and teachers.[88] He then called them and said to them, *"My sons, what is this report that I have heard concerning you from all the people, that you are treating the people of God with contempt? No my sons! This is not a good report that I hear concerning you. If a man sins against another man, appeal can be made to the Lord. But if a man sins against the Lord, to whom does one*

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[85] *B* omits "fasting"
[86] Hosea 4:6
[87] 1Samuel 2:30
[88] A omits "and teachers"

appeal?" [89] This is the ineffective rebuke with which Eli rebuked his sons. He kept quiet [after that] and they did not receive his chastising rebuke. O Eli, chief priest of the people, when your sons, impious men, do not listen to you, is it not necessary that you oversee the priesthood? You share in the sins which your sons are committing! Though it was clear in the eyes of the people that he had rebuked them, he did not do so with his whole heart.

19. For this reason our Saviour warned us, *"If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away from you, as with your hand or your foot."* These are the parts that are honoured in the body: the eye that sees, the hand that works, and the foot that walks. If these parts cause you to sin, cut them off and throw them away from you, and at least you will not be estranged from life.[90] Like our Saviour, Moses also issued a warning: *"If your son or your daughter, or the wife you have covenanted with, or your friend who is as close to you as your own soul, if one of these entices you and says to you, 'Forsake the Lord! Come, and let us go and serve other gods,' do not listen or be convinced, and do not pity them or hide them, but they must be stoned and die."* [91] A son and daughter and wife and young person are [like] the cherished parts of the body: the eye and hand and legs, which are honoured and cherished in all the body. Our Saviour also taught, *"Whoever does not love me more than his father and his mother, and [even] more than his own soul, he is not able to become my disciple."* [92] And Moses said, *"Love the Lord your God with all your soul and all your strength and all your possessions."* [93] The holy scriptures teach these things. Therefore let us be diligent in [doing] them, so that God will cherish us and bring us to his precious kingdom.

20. It was because of their iniquity that the sons of Aaron, clothed in holiness, were thrown outside the camp without pity into a de-

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[89] 1Samuel 2:23-25
[90] Matthew 5: 29-30; 18: 8-9
[91] Deuteronomy 13: 6, 8, 10
[92] Luke 14:26. Cf. Matthew 10:37
[93] Deuteronomy 6:5

filed place. It was because of the iniquity of the sons of Eli that the people of Israel fell under the swords of the Philistines and the ark of the testament was taken. It was brought to Ashdod, to the house of Dagon, an unclean temple. Furthermore, it was because he neglected the ministry of the ark of God that the Lord burst forth with slaughter and he died. And what was the negligence of Uzzah, friends?[94] Was it not the fact that he carried the ark on a heifer and transgressed the Law and did what was not commanded by Moses? For when the nobles of Israel brought gifts of oxen and heifers for the dedication of the tabernacle, the Holy One gave a command to Moses his servant and said to him, *"Accept [these] from them and give [them] to the Levites, so that with the heifers they might do their work in the tabernacle, and let them carry with the heifers the whole ministry of the tabernacle."* [95] For he said to him, *"Give the Gershonites enough for their work, but do not give [any] to the Kohathites, because the care of the holy place is their responsibility, which they will carry on their shoulders with honour, splendour, and glory."* [96] You know, brothers, that the ark of the testament was never carried on a heifer until the time when the leaders of Philistines sent it [back], placing it on a heifer being pulled by two cows which had been deprived of their calves. When the Israelites received the ark, the Levites took it down from the heifer which the Philistines had sent, and placed it in the house of Abinidab, which was in Gibeath. They wanted to carry the ark in this way, and not on their shoulders as the Holy One had commanded Moses and Moses had commanded the priests. And Uzzah did not know that God instructed Joshua son of Nun in the following way when he crossed the Jordan: *"The priests must carry the ark and go before the people, and the Jordan will be divided."* [97] And all the people broke camp. Uzzah [should have] known this, and for this reason he justly received the judgement of [God's] wrath. When David saw that the Lord had broken forth [in anger] against Uzzah, he was afraid to bring the ark of God with him. So he brought it to the

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[94] A: "my friend?"
[95] Numbers 7:5
[96] Numbers 7:7, 9
[97] Joshua 3:13-14

house of Obed-Edom the Gittite, since Obed-Edom was a Philistine from Gath; he was from an unclean people and not from Israel. Obed-Edom knew this: that whoever did not honour the ark of God would be struck with painful diseases and evil afflictions, just as the Philistines were struck with tumours, and the Ekronites cried out, *"Let the ark go to Gath!"* [98] Obed-Edom knew [about honouring the ark] after the Philistines led the ark [back] and at the same time made an offering for it. The sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas, priests who despised the service [of God], were killed, but the Philistines were afraid and honoured the ark of God, and when they sent it back, they sent it back with offerings, and it was considered to be a great god in their eyes. For as soon as they saw that the ark had come into the camp [of the Hebrews], they said, *"Woe to us, for a god has come into the camp of the Hebrews! Be strong, Philistines, for this is the god who destroyed the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues!"* [99] Take note, friends, that Obed-Edom the Gittite was blessed because the ark of God entered into his house. When David brought it up from the house of Obed-Edom to the city of Zion, he gave orders to the priests and they carried it on their shoulders. It was then, as David walked on foot, and was rejoicing and dancing before the ark, that Michal daughter of Saul mocked him.

21. It is necessary for us to write these things to you, friends, in order to warn both our souls and yours that it is because of the neglect of the ministry of the Holy One that all these things have happened to us at this time. Because we have not honoured him he has given us over to mockery before our enemies and has treated us with contempt, as he said: *"Those who treat me with contempt will be despised."* [100]

22. For our intelligences have become clouded with pride, and greed has conquered us and has polluted the springs of wisdom. The foundations of doctrine have been obscured because of greed

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[98] See 1Samuel 5:6-12
[99] 1Samuel 4:7-9
[100] 1Samuel 2:30

and pride. Sin came to the world through the enticement of greed, when Adam sinned with the food of the tree and went out from paradise. For the Holy One had left for Adam all the trees of paradise, which were full of blessed fruit, and he said to him, *"From all of these you may eat. However, you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, lest you die."* [101] All of paradise, which was larger and more excellent than all the land which is now sown by the descendants of Adam, was not enough for his greed. In the end, all the righteous will find rest, at the time when the power of greed is taken away, as our Lord said to the one on his right, *"Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in the garden of Eden."* [102] And again it is written in the prophet, *"The righteous inherit the earth and live on it forever."* [103] But they will not inherit it for ever and ever, for it will certainly pass away, as it is written, *"The heavens will pass away like smoke, and the earth will wear out like a garment."* [104] Our Lord also said, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."* [105] These heavens, which are above us, and are called the firmament, pass away, and this earth, which is withered, wears out. But the earth of life and the heavens which are above the firmament, these do not wear out or pass away.

23. This whole earth and this whole paradise were not enough for the greed which came upon Adam, until he passionately desired to take and eat that which he had been commanded [to avoid]. It was because of greed that Esau sold his birthright, and was also rejected for the blessing. It was because of greed that Pharoah ravaged the land of Egypt. It was not enough for his greed that he ruled [his] whole people: he also wanted to subdue Israel with slavery. Furthermore, the sons of Aaron who were greedy were rejected from the priesthood, and wrath fell upon the Israelites who greedily desired food at various times, [in the form of] slaughter, serpents, and

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[101] Genesis 2:17
[102] Luke 23:43
[103] Psalm 37:29
[104] Isaiah 51:6
[105] Matthew 24:35

other diseases of various kinds. And Achan, because of his greedy desire, was stoned to death and passed away within his people.[106] It was greed that made the wicked priests, the sons of Eli,[107] lose their lives. And because Saul, the king chosen by the people, coveted the banned property of Amalek which God had commanded him to destroy, he fell from his greatness and his kingdom was torn from him. Ahab son of Omri, king of Israel, coveted and siezed the vineyard of Naboth, and he fell in the battle at Ramoth Gilead. Again, it was because greed that Gehazi the disciple of Elisha was covered with leprosy. Greed has killed many and deprived them of their lives. The greed of Judas Iscariot, [one] of the twelve, was not satisfied with what he was stealing until he received a price for the Beloved One, and through greed he was separated from the disciples, his companions. Greed also overcame Ananias, and a portent was shown through him at the feet of the apostles.

24. The whole world is not enough for greed. For each of the kings among all the nations and all the languages, his region is not enough for him. They gather together armies and make wars; they destroy cities and plunder countries. They take captives and acquire [goods] for themselves, but nothing is enough for them. They labour and wear themselves out and learn [how to make] wars. They uproot fortified cities and give chase. They rise up and reach the heights and they go down to the depths, so that perhaps greed will be satisfied, but it is not filled up. When riches multiply, greed [also] increases. When possessions abound, the longing of the eye[s] grows strong. Daily bread is enough for the one who is poor, but the one who is rich thinks about years when he will no longer be living. A garment of rags is enough for the poor, but greed is clearly in evidence in all the luxurious clothing from every land. The sleeping mat of the poor man is on the ground, and this suffices for him. But the couch of the rich man, the luxurious beds and mattresses of all kinds: these are small things for greed. The drink of the poor man is water, and he is satisfied, but the rich man

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[106] Joshua 7:25
[107] *B*: "Aaron"

drinks aged wine, and longs for more. The rich have gold and silver, but they become a stumbling-block for them, and because of them they are killed. The sleep of all those who love greed is fretful, but the sleep of poverty is quiet and restful. The poor man plans on sharing his bread with the one who has need, but the rich man ponders [how to] swallow up the one who is weaker than he. Blessed is the one who has not served gluttony, and the man whom greed has not conquered. Blessed is the one who meditates on knowledge, so that through it the roots of greed might be cut off.

25. Because of what we have written to you, friends, you [now] know that it is as a result of greed that the handlers of the Law and the power among our people are envious and jealous, while our teaching matches our way of living. We walk contentiously because we have been instructed contentiously. With respect to the laying on of hands, the consecration which some among us have received, they struggle to achieve only what is necessary for it. It is rare in our times to find someone asking, 'Who is it that fears God?' Rather, [the question is], 'Who is the oldest for the laying on of hands?' And when they say, 'Such and such is the oldest,' they say to him, 'You may recline at the head of the table.' And there is no one who remembers the saying of the Saviour when he denounced the scribes and the Pharisees and said to them, *"Woe to you who love [prominent] seats in the synagogue and taking your places at dinners, and who love it when people call you, 'Rabbi! Rabbi!'"* [108] Brothers! Titles do not come [with us] into life,[109] nor do they enable [us] to escape death, just as they did not deliver Nadab and Abihu nor did they save Hopni and Phineas. But with titles are required good works, for actions without titles save those who do them, but titles without good works are not useful or profitable, as we wrote to you above. Our brothers take pride in the titles that they have received, and through them they bind and excommunicate and receive honour, as if to say, 'I am powerful!' Today, what the prophet said is ful-

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[108] Matthew 23:6-7; Mark 12:39; Luke 11:43, 20:46

[109] *B*: "into rest"

filled: *"The one who is powerful speaks [according to] his desire."* [110] And he said, *"My sheep have been dispersed for lack of a shepherd."* [111] Again he said, *"The shepherds have fed themselves, but have not fed my flock."* [112] He also said, *"O shepherds, who cause to perish and disperse the sheep of my pasture!"* [113] And again he said to the shepherds, *"You graze on the good pasture and tread down with your feet whatever is left; you drink the clean water and stir up the rest with your feet. My sheep graze on what you have trampled with your feet, and drink from the agitated water that you have left."* [114] He also said to the shepherds, *"You eat the fat of the sheep and wear the wool, but you do not feed the sheep; you subdue them with force."* [115]

26. O shepherd who does not know his honour! Who are you to judge a servant who does not belong to you?! If he stands, he stands for his master, and if he falls, he falls for his master. But nevertheless, he stands well! If you are not able to be acquitted, why do you keep doing wrong? If in your mind[116] you elevate yourself over me and say, 'I am a teacher and a king over you,' and I do not accept you, [then] you bind me. How can you teach me humility when you are proud and exalted and full of yourself? And how can you teach me, 'Love one another,' when you are full of hatred and anger? And how can you teach me, 'If a person takes what is yours, do not request it back,' when you seek what is yours and demand interest? And how can you teach me, 'Be modest!', when you are licentious and talk foolishly and boast? And how can you teach me, 'Forsake this world!', when you have fallen into the middle of it and are suffocated? And how can you teach me, 'Give relief to the poor,' when you persecute the poor, your fellow servants? And how can you teach me, 'Let go of what is in your heart,' when you keep old yeast within yourself. And how can you teach

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[110] Micah 7:3
[111] Ezekiel 34:5
[112] Ezekiel 34:8
[113] Jeremiah 33:2
[114] Ezekiel 34:18-19
[115] Ezekiel 34:3-4
[116] A omits: "in your mind"

me, 'Make peace with your brother,' when you greatly agitate the world? For if I see in you fruit that is not good you say to me that even if you are wicked and impious, [I should] behave according to your words. He who teaches and acts [on his own teaching] is called great, but he who goes against [his own teaching] is called unworthy. You have received money and have held on to it; the key has been handed to you but you have closed the door. You have not entered, and those who do wish to enter you refuse. You are the eye of the body, but you have become blind, and the body is in darkness for lack of an eye. You have become blind, and the body cannot see. It is a case of the blind leading the blind! You [seem to] want to throw your whole body into a pit! Salt, when it loses its flavour, is thrown outside. The servant who accumulates money goes to the darkness, and the master of the servant who beats his companions demands recompense from him. The ignorant shepherd's eye is blind and his arm is withered. Do not the priests say, 'Where is the Lord?' The handlers of the Law do not understand it, and the shepherds are unfaithful to it. From the prophets of Jerusalem comes forth godlessness over the whole earth.[117] The leaders of my people are uprooting them, and women have power over the people. Henceforth we do not fear the Lord. What will the King do to us? Woe to us! What have we become when the Law is forsaken and some among us adorn themselves with wickedness? We ought to sit and be quiet and not talk. You said to me, 'Come to us and be a participant in all that I am doing.' In you, therefore, teacher, is fulfilled the word which our Lord spoke: *"You encompass the sea and the land in order to make one convert, but in doing so you make him a son of Hell!"* [118] The prophet deceives and breaks faith with his companion, and because he has heard his words he is delivered to the power of the lion, who tears him [to pieces]. When many priests and prophets perished in the days of

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[117] Jeremiah 23:15. Pierre interprets this as a veiled criticism of claims of superiority and authority which were based on (supposed?) historical (and familial?) connections with the original Jerusalem Church (1988, p. 81, n. 21).

[118] Matthew 23:15

Ahab, God spared seven thousand who did not bow down on their knees and did not worship Baal (Elijah was not angry with these ones), and who did not follow after the wicked and blind priests who lead [people] to ruin. If Reheboam divided the kingdom, should I follow his example? Far be it from me! If Jereboam forsake his God, should I go in his footsteps? My God will deliver me from these things!

27. You say to me, 'I am honourable and virtuous, and God has chosen me and annointed me that I might rule over my people.' Be persuaded, O human: God had sworn and promised to Phineas son of Eleazar that he and his sons would be the foundation of the priesthood forever. Phineas served the priesthood for all the days of the judges, for three hundred and sixty-five years. After him Eli arose, but when Eli and his sons broke the Law, the Holy One broke his promise, and said to Eli through the prophet, *"It is true that I said that you and the house of your father would serve before me forever. From now on, may [such a promise] be far from me, says the Lord. Those who honour me I will honour, but those who despise me will be disgraced."* [119] Our forefather Isaac wanted to bless his firstborn Esau, but Jacob was chosen from the womb of his mother, as Rebecca was told, *"The older will be subservient to the younger."* [120] The Holy One chose Saul to be king, but because he did not do his will, he chose David and rejected Saul. They embellish and bring to us, brothers, a weak and inappropriate excuse: 'It is because the times are evil that God has established us to govern his people, in the likeness of Jehu, who was annointed in an inner chamber.' But what if someone asked you, O wise scribe,[121] 'When was the promise given that Jehu would be annointed, and when was the annointing given to him?' What would you say to him? Elijah received a command on Mount

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[119] 1Samuel 2:30

[120] Genesis 25:23

[121] A similar title is given to Aphrahat's Jewish opponent in 15.5, 8. The term "scribes" appears alongside "priests" and "sages" in 7.18 to designate three categories of Church leadership. In 22.11 Aphrahat uses the term to address the same 'friend' that he addresses throughout.

Horeb, and [God] said to him, *"Go and annoint Jehu, that he might be king over Israel and destroy the house of Ahab."* [122] Elijah was commanded [thus] and he served for many years until he was taken up [to God], and after him [came] Elisha. When the time of Jehu came, and the measure of the sins of the house of Ahab abounded, Elisha sent for a member of the company of the prophets, and he went and annointed Jehu as he was commanded. If then it is to Jehu that they compare the situation, how is it that he[123] is commissioned by a priest to govern the people, and when in power would destroy all his brothers and put them in prison and excommunicate them, as Jehu destroyed the house of Ahab? The excuse resembles that of Jezebel. When she saw Jehu coming, who had been made king, she adorned herself and regarded him from the window, and said to him, *"Come in peace, Zimri, killer of [your] master!"* But her excuse destroyed her, for Jehu killed her and cut her up and threw her to the dogs.

28. Whether they say to us that he has been chosen from the womb of his mother like Jacob, or has been sanctified from the womb like Jeremiah, or destined for the kingdom and called 'son of God' like Solomon, or chosen before his conception like Josiah, or that he built the temple like Cyrus, be convinced, O human, that Aaron did not glorify himself in order to become the leader of the priests. And Moses, when his Lord wanted him to make himself into a god for Pharoah and a leader for his people, was asked many times before the Lord sent him, with great difficulty, to Egypt and performed signs and wonders through him.

29. O human! Should we look upon a person's stature, as with Saul, or on outward appearance, as with Eliab, or on perfection of beauty, as with Absalom? The Lord does not take pleasure in appearance, or in the exalted or the proud. Samuel said, *"The Lord examines the heart, while humans look with their eyes."* [124] And the apostle

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[122] 1Kings 19:16
[123] Presumably the bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon
[124] 1Samuel 16:7

said, *"God chose the foolish things of the world, so that he might confound the wise through them, and he chose the weak things so that he might confound the strong through them. He chose those of common origin, the lowly, and the despised, and [he chose] the things that are not so as to abolish the things that are, so that no flesh might boast before God, from whom you are."* [125] Jeremiah also says, *"Let not the powerful man boast of his power, nor the rich man boast of his wealth, nor the strong man boast of his strength, but whoever boasts, let him boast in the Lord."* [126] For all human beings are the creation of God, and before him there is no slave or free person, no rich or poor, but all who serve before him are equal. And if people should boast in an abundance of words and a wealth of knowledge, they are not able to be justified through these things. For thus is it written: *"A multitude of words are not answered, nor will a talkative man be justified by what he says."* [127] Again it is written: *"He deprives the faithful of speech, and takes away discernment from the elders."* [128] This is written in many ways [in scripture].

30. But as for you, brothers, pursue peace, work for harmony, suppress wickedness, remove enmity, and pacify the rebellious. For justice is not conquered by evil, and righteousness is not defeated by wickedness; peace is not silenced by controversy, and truth is not deceived by falsehood. The righteous person does not agree with the wicked, nor the just with the impious, nor the good with the bad, nor the pleasant with the bitter. Nor does darkness go with light, nor brightness with gloom, nor what is tasteless with what is salty. Old yeast does not go with new dough, nor fire with water, nor peacemakers with the factious, nor believers with scoffers, nor royalty with those in prison, nor the blessed with the cursed, nor the sons of the kingdom with the sons of Hell, nor those who fear God with those who trouble his flock, nor the Church of the Holy One with the teachings of the Evil One. Wickedness cannot be concealed, nor can falsehood be hidden. Who-

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[125] 1Corinthians 1:27-30
[126] Jeremiah 9:23; 1Corinthians 1:31
[127] Job 11:2
[128] Job 12:20

ever wishes to pursue and work for peace and harmony will receive the blessing that our Lord gave: *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God."* [129] Who does not desire to become a son of the Father who is in heaven, and a brother to Christ the King?

31. Behold, brothers, how worthy of honourable memory are those who work for the peace and harmony of the people! For why did our Saviour have to die? And why did he take from Sheol? Though being the Living One, he died on behalf of the rebellious and reconciled them to his Father, and he went to Sheol and brought forth its prisoners. He fought with the Evil One and defeated and trampled him. He forced his way into his streets and seized his possessions. He broke down his doors and smashed his bars. He took the thorns of [the Evil One] and put them on his head. He sealed our souls with his own blood. He set free the prisoners from the confining pit. He broke through the fence and the point of the sword and took the curse and nailed it on his Cross. He gathered together those who were scattered and pacified the rebellious. He satisfied the hungry and gave water to the thirsty. He opened the eyes of the blind and healed the sick. He straightened those who were bent over and caused the lame to walk. He took our sorrows, healed our wounds and cured our diseases. He brought near we who were distant, and gathered together we who were scattered, and made us inhabitants of his dwelling-place. He enriched us through his poverty and restored us through his sickness. He healed us through his crucifixion and brought us relief through his suffering. And because he endured all these things on our behalf, his Father *"gave him the name that is above all names, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, not only on earth but also in heaven,"* and while bowing and worshipping they will say *"Jesus Christ is Lord,' to the glory of God his Father."* [130] And he became the Judge and Lord[131] of the dead and the living, as it is written in his Gospel:

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[129] Matthew 5:9
[130] Phillipians 2:9-11
[131] *B* omits "and Lord"

"The Father judges no one, but has given all judgement to his Son." [132] The reward of our Saviour for his suffering was this: a great and honourable name, for having pacified a rebellious region. Those who associate themselves with him and make peace and harmony become his brothers and sons of God. They inherit the kingdom; they serve and are served by the watchers of heaven, those who are not envious or jealous, who do not grow weary or sleep, and who rejoice over these sinners who turn from [their] sins.

32. Friends! It is not enough for us to learn[133] how to read the scriptures of God: we must also act! This is how we see the matter: as long as a person is full of rebuke and controversy, his prayer will not be received, his petition will not be heard, his offering will not be lifted up from the earth, and his alms will not [bring about] pardon for [his] sins. For as long as peace and harmony are not present, the door is open to the Evil One. [There is] rebuke and chastisement, but it is without judgement or investigation. Sins are sifted [together], weeds are mixed in [with the wheat], thistles spring up, factions multiply, mockers increase, scoffers abound. There is no admonition, no correction, no discernment. The salt has lost its flavour. The eye has grown dim. The body has become sluggish. Initiative has been taken away. There is no peace for those coming and going. These are the fruits which give birth to controversy. It is at times like these that the triumphant are recognized, the diligent are discerned, and the strong are tested. Those who pursue peace and work for harmony [receive] a lasting reward and abundant compensation. These are the ones who stand in the gap and repair the wall, and who give themselves to the work on behalf of their people. They are assigned a good memory with the triumphant and the diligent workers.

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[132] John 5:22

[133] This comment continues Aphrahat's criticism at the end of section 29: a person is not justified through "an abundance of words and a wealth of knowledge".

33. In each generation, friends, and at every time, as it pleased our good Creator, he brought honour to those of little importance and treated the proud with contempt. He raised up the humble and humbled those of high standing. He impoverished the rich and raised up the poor. He enfeebled the strong and strengthened the weak. He cut down great men and empowered the lowly. He elevated Seth, the younger one, over Cain, the firstborn, and Noah over Adam, as the father of a second world. He elevated Isaac over Ishmael; Jacob over Esau; Joseph over Reuben; Ephraim over Manessah; Eleazar and Ithamar over Nadab and Abihu; Joshua and Caleb over their companions, the ten [other] spies; Samuel over Eli; David over Saul; Solomon over Adonijah; Jereboam over Reheboam;[134] Jehu over Ahab; Mordecai over Haman; Daniel and his brothers over the wise men of Babylon; the peoples over the People. It has been the same with women: he elevated Sarah over Hagar, the mother of [Abraham's] firstborn; Rachel over Leah; Hannah over Peninnah; Esther over Vashti. Furthermore, prophecy and judgement were accomplished by women at certain times, since this pleased the one who elevates the humble. Miriam was a prophet; Hannah was a prophet; Huldah was a prophet; Elizabeth was a prophet; Mary was a prophet and the mother of the Great Prophet; Deborah was a prophet and a judge of Israel in the days of Barak, son of Abinoam, the king. No one can find fault with the will of our good God, for no one has searched out his judgements. His ways cannot be analyzed, his judgements are unexpected, and his mind cannot be measured.

34. Great are the works of God; deep and wondrous are his thoughts. He suspended the sky without pillars, and made firm the earth without supports. He gathered the waters together into pools, and confined winds and hurricanes within the storehouses of his will. He stretched out the firmament in the middle, as a division between the waters [above] and the waters [below]. He separated

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[134] These two names appear to have been accidentally reversed, since Jereboam is usually portrayed as the more wicked of the two. But cf. section 40.

the dry land from the sea. He set lights in the firmament. He set up mountains on the earth. He separated the day from the night and light from darkness and summer from winter. He established the sand as a boundary for the sea, and enclosed the seas in an ocean; the surging waves do not go past the boundary. The sun travels without feet, and the moon proceeds in succession. The clouds race without wings, the wind blows without a means to fly, and water flows without a living soul. The earth is suspended on the waters, and the waters are gathered together as foundations. The wind has no vision, the air has no sense of touch, the sky has no shape, and the clouds have not been given knowledge. The creatures of the sea are powerful, but the monsters in it are without speech. The arms of intelligence are stretched out, and the wings of thought are extended; the senses of the mind explore, and the eyes of the conscience gaze intently. The openings of the sense of hearing fly to perceive and to understand the inquiry. But even all of these together do not comprehend.

35. Who perceives the place of knowledge? Who comprehends the foundation of wisdom? Who discerns the place of understanding?[135] It is hidden from every living thing, and from the thoughts of all flesh. It cannot be bought with gold by the foolish. Its treasure is opened and permitted to those who ask. Its light exceeds that of the sun; its glory is more beautiful and attractive than the moon. The inner chambers of the mind search it out, the faculties of thought acquire it, and the fullness of the intellect inherits it. The one whose heart has an open door finds it, and the one who extends the wings of his intellect inherits it. It lives in those who are diligent, and is planted in the midst of the heart of the one who is wise. The ligaments of [his heart] are set firmly in their sources, and in it he possesses hidden treasure. His thought flies to every height, and his reflection goes down to every depth. [Wisdom] paints wonders in the midst of his heart, and the eyes of his senses see across oceans. All created things are enclosed in his thought; the inclination [of his thought] is enlarged, in order to receive [all

[135] Job 28:12, 20; Sirach 1:6 (for the phrase "foundation of wisdom")

things]. He is the great temple of his Creator, and the High King enters and lives in him. [The King] carries his mind to the heights, and his thought flies to his sanctuary; he shows him all kinds of treasure. His intellect is absorbed with vision, and his heart is captivated by all its senses. [The King] shows him that which he did not know. He gazes on that place and examines it; his mind marvels at all that he sees: all the watchers pursue [the King's] service, and the seraphim sanctify his glory, flying on their swift wings with white and beautiful garments. They hide their faces from his brightness, and their course is more swift than the wind. There the throne of the kingdom is set up, and the Judge is preparing the court. Seats are set up for the righteous to judge the wicked on the day of judgement. When the wise man sees in his mind the place of his many treasures, then his thought is elevated, and his heart conceives and gives birth to all good things, and he meditates on all that has been commanded.[136] His form and his vision are on the earth, but the senses of his intellect are above and below. His reasoning is more swift than the sun, and its rays fly [faster] than the wind, like a swift wing to all places. The wise man is strong in his mind, [even if] his vision is weak and failing, and [he] is infused and filled up more than a large treasure. In the night, the darkness is illuminated, and he sends his thoughts to all places. His mind explores every foundation and the treasure of knowledge is brought to him. What his ears do not hear he sees, and what his eyes do not see he senses. His contemplation crosses over every sea; strong waves are not a concern for him, since his mind [needs] no ship or sailor. Great and abundant is the storehouse of his merchandise: when he gives from what he owns, he loses nothing, and the poor become rich from his storehouse. There is no limit to the mind of the One who is contained and who lives inside of him. O place where the King lives and is served! Who can count His treasures in you? His revenues and expenses are huge, like a king who needs nothing.

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[136] Cf. 10.8 and 22.26 for other passages that describe the treasury of God's wisdom.

36. Listen, friends, to those who remind both us and you of how all God's creatures do his will and do not trample on his commandments. Each one of them, according to what it has been commanded, quickly effects his will. But human beings of every age resist and do not do his will: *"They do see, nor do they hear or understand."* [137] For the Holy One reproached the Israelites through Jeremiah, and said to them, *"Do you not fear me? says the Lord. Do you not tremble before me? For I placed the sand as a boundary for the sea, an eternal ordinance which it cannot transgress. [The sea] struggles [against it] but cannot [break through]; the waves rise up, but they cannot cross over it. But this people has a rebellious and contentious heart, and they do not want to hear my commandments."* [138] Behold [these] amazing wonders: the sea is confined by the sand, the waves are imprisoned by the commandment, and all the storms are restrained by the word. They rise up and swell to heaven, they are tormented and press down to the depths, but they cannot go past the limit which has been decreed for them. If someone should say, 'It is in their nature to be limited', let that person understand what happened in the days of Noah. When the wrath [of God] brought the water of the flood, he lifted the word from the hands of the depths, and raised the commandment from the confining sand. The water broke through and crossed over the limit, the floodgates of heaven opened, the firmament, the boundary between water and water, was pierced, and judgement was passed on the wicked. For he placed the firmament as a boundary between the water which was above the firmament and that which was below, as it is written, *"God made the firmament in the midst of the waters, so that it might distinguish water from water,"* [139] and he set lights in it and called it 'heaven'. And he gathered together the water from the surface of the dry area to one place. The gathering of water he called 'seas', and the dry area he called 'land'. And when he had passed judgement on the ungodly, and the corrupted generation which had disobeyed the commandment had perished, then the waters below went back to the abyss, the sand continued

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[137] Jeremiah 5:21
[138] Jeremiah 5:22-23
[139] Genesis 1:6-7

to keep the commandment. The floodgates of heaven were restrained, and the firmament guarded the water above according to the commandment. The world sat between the water which was above the firmament and the water which was below the land. The great volume of water contained in the clouds is all kept and placed [there] on the foundation of his will. And it is not only water which does his will, but all creatures at all times quickly obey his commandment. [It was] water in the days of Noah, and water, fire, darkness, swarm, locust, hail, and all the diseases which were in Egypt [came] by the hand of Moses. Sun, moon, and hailstones obeyed the command of Joshua son of Nun, when he said, *"Sun, remain at Gibeon, and Moon, in the valley of Aijalon."* [140] Why did the sun remain at Gibeon, if not because the Gibeonites had taken refuge in the God of Israel, and the kings of the Amorites had risen against them until Joshua destroyed them while the sun stood still and the moon remained [where it was]. The stars of the sky also obeyed his command, and fought from their places, and made war against Sisera and Midian in the days of Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam.[141] And the savage beasts did his bidding too: a bear mauled the children,[142] offspring of the wicked, and the lions guarded Daniel,[143] according to the command [of God]. The fish of the sea also did his will, when he commanded it and it swallowed Jonah. When he spoke to it, it released Jonah to dry land.[144] The worm also did his will with the young gourd plant which gave shade to Jonah, when he commanded it and it cut down the plant. And a hot wind dried it up at the command [of God].[145] The ravens, flying creatures, also did his will, and brought nourishment to Elijah in Wadi Cherith.[146] Many fish also did his bidding, when they

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[140] Joshua 10:12
[141] Cf. Judges 5:20
[142] 2Kings 3:24
[143] Daniel 6:23
[144] Jonah 2:10
[145] Jonah 4:6-7
[146] 1Kings 17:6

were miraculously caught by the apostles of our Saviour.[147] And another fish supplied the head tax for our Saviour and Simon his disciple.[148] Heaven, earth, and all creatures do his will at each moment, and none among them has resisted his will.

37. But the transgression of the Law[149] is found with Adam. From the first day and forever, he transgresses the Law.[150] What contentiousness is greater than [our present situation], my friends? Because of a stirring up of confusion and controversy, headstrong and wicked men have spread among our people. [These men are] ambitious and scornful, foul-mouthed and cursing, jealous and spiteful, agitators and lovers of greed. They rejoice in destruction and delight in slippery places. They hate truth and drive away righteousness. They extort, defraud, deceive, and pour contempt on their friends. They are established in falsehood, and concealed in wickedness. They mock those who are good and they collect wealth. They insult the righteous and love controversies. They stir up those who are at peace and incite conflicts. They conceive evil and give birth to falsehood. They like to argue and reject instruction. They are full of anger and their minds are stubborn. They assert their will and hate the poor. They are proud and conceited, pillagers and oppressors. They are flatterers and pick up on words. They are greedy and impure. They seduce [people] to [their] ruin. They are drunkards and gluttons, deceivers and liars. They conceal their envy and love to pay back evil for evil. They reward envy and stir up controversy. They are full of deceit and empty of goodness. They lend money and sell with interest. They are wicked labourers and lazy workers. They eat in the name of our Lord and are honoured in his name and proclaim in his name, but they are empty of his words. These people are deceitful labourers who hold on to money and make no profit. They are wicked servants who oppress their fellow servants. They are darkness within light, false prophets

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[147] John 21:4-8
[148] Matthew 17:27
[149] A: "of the commandment"
[150] A: "the commandment"

and deceptive messiahs. They are evildoers,[151] inheriting darkness, who ask for water from the righteous.[152] They are thistles in the vineyard; they build on sand a structure that falls.[153] They turn away from the battle, for their god is their stomach and their glory their shame.[154] They are whitewashed walls,[155] the army of the Evil One, the offspring of Satan. They are serpents,[156] and mute dogs who are unable to bark.[157] They are self-justifiers, wise in the ways of evil and lacking in understanding. They are sowers of discord, who rejoice in division and exult in slippery places. They are asleep to what is good but awake to what is evil. They give birth to conflict. They are lovers of themselves, stuffed adversaries,[158] enemies of Christ. They are old yeast,[159] worn out wineskins,[160] torn garments.

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[151] Lit. 'children of the left'. As the second part of the verse makes clear, the reference is to those on the left of Christ at the final judgement (see Matthew 25).

[152] See Luke 16:24 (Lazarus and the rich man)

[153] See Matthew 7:26; Luke 6:49

[154] Phillipians 3:19

[155] Cf. Acts 23:3

[156] Syr. ܚܘܝܬܐ ܚܪܡܢܐ . Cf. Isaiah 59:5. For the term ܚܪܡܢܐ Payne-Smith gives "basilisk" or "cockatrice", and she notes that it often occurs with ܚܘܝܐ . The basilisk was a mythical creature whose breath and glance were fatal. Some translators have assumed that the term has the same meaning as the adjective ܚܪܡܐ ('savage', 'fierce'). In 21.3, however, Aphrahat uses the term as a substantive, in an allusion to Isaiah 59:5. Most likely, Aphrahat has a particular kind of serpent in mind, which the term ܚܘܝܬܐ ܚܪܡܢܐ designates, and then later, in 21.3, uses the term ܚܪܡܢܐ elliptically. The function of ܚܪܡܢܐ here does not seem to be strictly adjectival, though its use as part of a name of a serpent is based on its adjectival funtion. It should be noted that the term ܐܟܕܢܐ , a Greek loan-word meaning 'viper', is used at the end of this section. This lends some support to "basilisks" as a translation of ܚܪܡܢܐ ܚܘܝܬܐ , since if Aphrahat wanted to designate another serpent here, he could have used 'viper'.

[157] Isaiah 56:10. Cf. dem. 7.21; 20.7-8

[158] Cf. Judges 3:17

[159] 1Corinthians 5:7

[160] Matthew 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37

They are seed [fallen] among thistles, rock for the seed,[161] and sand for the building.[162] They are superfluous to the kingdom, dust[163] for the serpent, a lamp under a bushel.[164] They are tasteless salt which is thrown outside and not used.[165] They abstain from good things. [They are] counterfeit money, broken vessels. They are a vineyard of wild grapes,[166] a vine of bitterness and a plantation of Gomorrha.[167] They are rejected silver, which the Lord has rejected.[168] He has called them 'impure', 'unfaithful love', 'foolish virgins', 'sleeping doorkeepers'. They justify the guilty and condemn the innocent; they are children of discord. They hate rebuke, and they frighten with words, eating bread with stories. They arm themselves with eloquence, they whisper in secret, they strike [people] in the back. They are foolish with words. Their concern is: "Give to me!" They sow discord among the brothers. They are false tongues, a heart which plans evil and deceit. Their words are sweet, yet more bitter than wormwood: they are the tips of arrows. They are defeated athletes, drowned sailors, the prey of destruction. They are deceptive watchmen, on the lookout for calamity and inciting wars. They are seditious messengers, setting up stumbling blocks, provoking kingdoms. They are the poison of death, the venom of the serpent, the tooth of the viper. They are adversaries of the Cross, the stumbling block of the crucifixion, the enemies of Christ. They are the offspring born from controversy. They are the fruit of division.

38. Friends! Children of peace! Disciples of Christ! You are the light of the world, the salt of the earth,[169] and the eye of the

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[161] Matthew 13:5-7; Mark 4:5-7; Luke 8:6-7
[162] See footnote 103
[163] Cf. 2.19; 14.10; 23.49
[164] Matthew 5:15; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16
[165] Matthew 5:3; Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34-35
[166] Isaiah 5:1-6
[167] Deuteronomy 32:32
[168] Jeremiah 6:30
[169] Matthew 5:13-14

body![170] You are friends of the Bridegroom,[171] the good seed,[172] the building on a rock.[173] You are wise architects[174] who lay the foundation and uncover decay. You are diligent farmers filling up the storehouses and harvesting the crops. You are wise merchants, receiving money and earning interest.[175] You are hired workers who receive their pay and ask for more.[176] You are the holders of the keys, faithful messengers, blowers of the trumpets. You are stewards [and] guardians, new wineskins and garments of glory.[177] You are apostles of the Bridegroom, a decorated bride, light in the darkness.[178] You are the children of peace, brothers of Christ, and the temple of the Spirit. You are combatants in the struggle, competitors in the race, receivers of wreaths.[179] You are vines in the vineyard, the seed of good wheat which bears a hundredfold harvest.[180] You are those who light [their] lamps and enter by the narrow door of the kingdom.[181] You are those on the right [of Christ], who travel on the straight and narrow path. You are those who have been saved by the Cross, ransomed by the blood and the body of Christ. You are messengers of Christ, true heralds, born of water. You are a sweet fragrance which spreads to all places.[182] You are new dough, in which there is no old yeast. You are the guests of the Bridegroom, wedding garments worthy of the banquet. You are bearers of the yoke, sitting in silence, the prisoners of the congrega-

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[170] Matthew 6:22-23
[171] John 3:29
[172] Matthew 13:24
[173] Matthew 7:24-25; Luke 6:47-49
[174] 1Corinthians 3:10. Cf. 10:9
[175] Matthew 25:27; Luke 19:23
[176] Matthew 20:11-12
[177] Matthew 9:16-17; Mark 2:21-22; Luke 5:36-38
[178] John 1:5
[179] 1Corinthians 9:24
[180] Matthew 13:8; Mark 4:8; Luke 8:8
[181] Matthew 7:13-14
[182] 2Corinthians 2:15

tion.[183] You are the offspring of the Church, the educators of its children, who gather together the flock.

39. You are brave shepherds, who lead their flocks to good pasture, and our saviour Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, the Light in the darkness, the Lamp on the lampstand who gives light to the world and has pardoned its sins. For he is the Good Pearl, and we are the merchants who sell our possessions and buy it. And he is the Treasure in the field: when we find it, we rejoice over it and hold on to it. For he is the Fountain of life; we who are thirsty drink from him. He is a Table which is full of rich food and abundance; we who are hungry eat and enjoy ourselves. He is the Gate[184] of the kingdom, which is opened for all who enter. He is the Wine that brings joy, from which those in mourning drink and forget their pains. He is the Garment and the Coat of Glory in which the victorious are clothed. He is the True Vineyard,[185] and his Father is the Vine-dresser, and we are the vines which are planted in his midst. He is the Bulwark upon which many build; let us calculate the cost so that we can construct and complete [our building].[186] He is the Bridegroom, the apostles lead us to the altar, and we are the bride;[187] let us prepare a wedding gift. He is the Ladder which leads to heaven; let us struggle and contend so that we might ascend on it to his father. He is the Straight and Narrow Way;[188] let us travel in his footsteps so that we might arrive safely. He is the Priest,[189] the Holy Minister; let us work in order to become members of his household. He is a King, a Son of noble descent who has come to take the kingdom;[190] let us honour his weakness in order to participate in his greatness. He is the Preacher and the Apostle of the

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[183] Cf. 14.16
[184] John 10:7
[185] John 15:1
[186] Luke 14:28-30
[187] John 3:29
[188] Matthew 7:14
[189] Syr. ܟܗܢܐ
[190] Luke 19:14

Most High; let us listen to his words in order to become partakers in his mystery. He is the Seed which bears much fruit; though small when planted it becomes a large tree.[191] He is the Firstborn Son, the child of Mary; let us receive his weakness in order to rejoice in his greatness. It is he who suffered and lived and ascended on high; let us believe in him firmly in order to be receptive to his coming. He is the Judge of the dead and the living, who sits on the throne and judges the nations.[192] It is he who bestows the kingdom and delivers to torment; he does not show favouritism nor does he accept bribes. Now, therefore, let us through him acknowledge his Father, and through him worship the One who sent him. Through him let us sanctify the One who sent him, who has given us his favour, and through him has chosen us, rejoiced over us, and called us, and has reconciled our smallness with his greatness. We have nothing to give back for these kindnesses except thanksgiving and worship and love for one another. We strive for these fruits which bring eternal life.

40. Friends! We need to turn to God and bring before him a conversion of heart, and not be partakers of the stubborness of Pharoah, nor the foolishness of Reheboam. Let us be far from controversies and divisions, which satisfy the will of Satan. For he comes subtly to people, and offers more things for their lives, and entices them with many desires. Through cravings of various kinds he comes to the children of Adam, and he empties them out like empty vessels, just as he did in the beginning[193] with their primordial father, when there was not one desire of his for him to recognize and flee from. For he has many deceitful tricks. With a desire for food he caused Adam to be expelled from paradise, and through a desire for murder he separated Abel from Cain his brother. Because of a desire to scorn [his father] Ham became a

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[191] Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:31-32; Luke 13:19

[192] Cf. Luke 22:30. The word translated "nations" (ܥܡܡܐ) can also mean "tribes".

[193] Literally, "as when he began with their first father"

servant of servants to his two brothers,[194] and through greedy desire Esau was rejected from the blessings and the right of the firstborn.[195] Through his appetite for licentiousness Shechem son of Hamor fell by the sword, he and all his people.[196] Because of a lust for hatred and envy, the sons of Jacob sold Joseph their brother to the Arabians.[197] Because of her immoral desire, the wife of Joseph's master tried to seduce him, but he slipped from her clutches.[198] Through their appetite for wantonness the Sodomites fell suddenly in the fire, and were consumed and burnt up in the furnace.[199] Because of his mad passion, Pharoah, king of Egypt, drowned in the sea, he and his army.[200] Through their desire for the idolatry[201] of Egypt, the children of Jacob perished in the dry desert.[202] Because of their greedy appetite for possessions, the sons of Reuben and Gad and Manessah were held back, and did not enter the promised land with their brothers.[203] Through their greed and drunkenness, Nadab and Abihu were consumed by fire in the tabernacle.[204] It was because of the desire for greed and theft that the Lord brought trouble on Achan at the hands of Joshua.[205] It was through the desire for wantonness of Zimri son of Salu that twenty-four thousand people fell from Israel in one hour.[206] Because of his instigation and wickedness, Abimelech son of Gideon killed his seventy brothers,[207] and through the desire of Delilah the prostitute the strength of Samson was taken away, and his Nazirite status left

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[194] Genesis 9:25
[195] Genesis 25:29-34
[196] Genesis 34:1ff
[197] Genesis 37:25-27
[198] Genesis 39:7-12
[199] Genesis 19:1-25
[200] Exodus 14:27-28
[201] Literally: "stink"
[202] Numbers 11:4-6
[203] Numbers 35:13-15
[204] Leviticus 10:1-5
[205] Joshua 7:24-25
[206] Numbers 25:1-15
[207] Judges 9:5

him.[208] Because of the impure desire of the men of Gibeah, sixty-five thousand [men] of Israel and Benjamin fell by the sword.[209] On account of greed the sons of Eli were rejected and expelled from the priesthood of the Holy One.[210] Because of a desire to have compassion on Amalek, the kingdom of Saul was torn [from him].[211] It was because of the desire of Tamar, sister of Absalom, that Amnon, the firstborn of David, was killed.[212] On account of his desire for grandeur, Adonijah son of Haggith was not fit to reign in the kingdom of the house of David.[213] Through his desire for many wives, the heart of Solomon went astray from his God.[214] Because of Reheboam's desire to do evil, the Lord divided the kingdom and tore it from him.[215] Because of Jereboam son of Nabat's desire to instigate, five hundred thousand fell from Israel in one day at the hands of Abijah son of Reheboam.[216] On account of his desire for Naboth's vineyard, Ahab was slain[217] in the battle at Ramoth Gilead.[218] Because of a desire for the silver of Naaman which he received, Gehazi was covered with leprosy, he and his descendants forever.[219] In his desire for treasures Hezekiah glorified himself, but his possession and his sons were taken captive to Babylon.[220] Because of Sennacherib's desire to blaspheme, his army fell by the sword of the Most High.[221] On account of the desire of Nebuchadnezzar's heart, he was chased from human company to be with the beasts of the field. Because of a desire to add to his

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[208] Judges 16:4ff
[209] Judges 19:11 - 20:48
[210] 1Samuel 2:12-17
[211] 1Samuel 15:23
[212] 2Samuel 13:1-29
[213] 1Kings 2:13-25
[214] 1Kings 11:4
[215] 1Kings 12:6-19
[216] 2Chronicles 13:13-18
[217] Literally, "he went up [to battle] and he fell"
[218] 1Kings 21:22-23
[219] 2Kings 5:20-27
[220] *B* adds "forever". 2Chronicles 32:25; 2Kings 20:12-19
[221] 2Kings 19:35-36; 2Chronicles 32:21; Isaiah 37:36-37

possessions, Haman wanted to destroy the descendants of the Jews. Out of a desire to make a pact with evildoers, the Chaldeans slandered Daniel. Because of his desire to steal Judas became a traitor to the annointed King.[222] On account of a desire for rebellion Israel rejected Christ and refused the kingdom.

41. There are many [other] examples like these written down. Various kinds of snares are set by the Deceiver. He spreads his net like a skilled hunter; he captures and guides and brings to destruction as he pleases. His pleasures are enjoyable; he does not lead by force but by enticement. He shows himself as sweet but is more bitter than wormwood. When an angry person is reconciled with his friend, [the Deceiver] mourns and laments the fact that he has slipped away from his enslavement. He is saddened by peace, but loves turmoil. In various settings he lays his bait for the prey. He sets his snares like a wise and skillful hunter. He casts out and gathers together all the members of his household. His paths are broad and his roads are spacious,[223] and all the contentious[224] travel with him. The wise see him and leap away[225] from him and do not do his will, for they know that he is deceptive. The wise see his hidden snares, and the concealed trap that he has set before them. They do not believe his offers, and they slip away from all his meals, which are bitter.

42. We write these things to you, friends (and also to ourselves as a reminder), not because you need to learn them from us, but rather as counsellors and co-workers, as it is written, *"The brother who is helped by his brother is like a fortified city."* [226] And the apostle

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[222] John 12:6. The phrase "annointed King" could be translated "King-Messiah".

[223] Matthew 7:13

[224] Literally: "children of commotion"

[225] A has ܚܕܡ ('be terrified'), a rare root not in Payne-Smith. *B* has ܚܕܡ ('to leap, frisk').

[226] See Prov. 18:19 for the closest match to this saying.

said, *"We are your co-workers, for your joy."* [227] Again he said, *"They are our co-workers in the kingdom of God."* [228] And it is written in another letter, *"Is there not among you one wise person who can bring agreement between brother and brother?"* [229] For the sages who feared God, when a word came forth from a simple person, [these] sages and co-workers received it without reservation. The man Moses, the first prophet, and the leader of the whole people of Israel, received good advice from Jethro, priest of Midian, and the name of Jethro was written in the holy book, and his advice was established in Israel forever.[230] But if anyone wishes to dispute this advice of ours and is not interested in pursuing peace, let him understand that there can always be found, in each generation, foolish people who do not listen to good advice: they come to a bad end. The Lord called Adam to repent when he sinned, but he was not receptive and defended himself by the excuse, "Eve led me astray."[231] He was not sorry, nor did he repent. [God] spoke to Cain after he killed his brother, so that he might feel remorse and repent, but he defended himself with a false excuse: "I have not seen him!"[232] [God] tried to convince the Sodomites through his angels so that they might repent, but they continued in their impudence and were destroyed. They were consumed and burnt up by the fire and the sulphur.[233] The princes of Pharoah the king warned him, "Egypt is perishing because of your disputes," but he did not listen to the advice of his sages.[234] The elders who had governed the kingdom with his father counselled Reheboam, but he rejected those who were wise and sought advice from the young, and his kindgom was divided and put to shame.[235] But you, our brothers, are wise and

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[227] 2Corinthians 1:24
[228] Colossians 4:11
[229] 1Corinthians 6:5
[230] *B*: "and the commandment of Israel was established forever"
[231] Cf. Genesis 3:12
[232] Cf. Genesis 4:9
[233] Genesis 19:1-26
[234] Exodus 10:7
[235] 1Kings 12:6-19

taught by God. Do not be ashamed or embarassed to seek agreement and pursue peace.

43. Jealousy and strife have stirred up kingdoms, destroyed cities, caused nations to perish, defeated fortresses, and brought about many murders; destruction increases because of them.[236] Envy and quarelling have separated brothers from their friends, driven them from city to city, and made them strangers, banished from their own countries.[237] Though they are alive and walk on the earth, they are considered as dead by the members of their race. Jealousy has divided women from their husbands, and through it sons have taken their stand against their fathers. Closest friends are divided against each other, and friends become enemies with those that they cherish. It provokes and stirs up a man against his neighbour, and divides two against three [and three] against two. A man murders his neighbour with his tongue; he destroys him with his mouth and has no mercy. Jealousy brings forth groans in a person day after day. Evil intentions are lodged within those who love controversies. Old yeast ferments and ages among them. It breeds vices and gives birth to bitter fruit. It chases away sleep in the long night. A friend is changed so that he treats his loved one shamefully. If a beautiful thought happens to come to his heart, the Evil One expels it and drives it out of his heart. He plants his roots in the recesses of his mind, and drives his nails into the meditations of his heart. He gathers together and brings to him many thoughts; they enter in and establish themselves in the midst of his mind. That which is born of the Evil One crawls and is implanted in him, but the discourse of the wise becomes foreign to him. The good seed is choked within him, as wheat is choked by thistles.[238] Pleasant fruit disappear from his mind, and he uproots and throws away the good seed from his heart. The Evil One sets up his sentinels at the gates of his understanding, and they disturb his mind with many

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[236] The verbs in this sentence are singular, though there are two subjects.

[237] *B* has these first two sentences reversed.

[238] Matthew 13:7; Mark 4:7; Luke 8:7

seductions. Like water they enter into it slowly, and make him drink. His heart is like a solid rock. When the good seed falls on it, he vigorously receives it, but its fibres dry out and it produces no fruit. He rises and prays as is [his] daily custom; he begins and finishes and seals his prayer, but his heart does not attend to what his lips express. His mouth learns the customary doctrine, but his heart is empty of goodness. He removes from his heart the teaching of the Spirit, and his mind forgets that it has been filled with learning. At the moment when his mind remembers it utters groan upon groan, but the Evil One encourages him and fills his heart. Deceptive intentions are fixed within him, and his heart floats as if on a deep pool of water. His heart is cloudy and his mind is dark. His intelligence is blind; he gropes and tries to find his balance. The Evil One takes him by the hand and hurries him and leads him on his paths, in a trackless desert that has no road. He makes light of and throws away all pleasant thoughts from before him, and directs his thoughts toward his own wicked actions. He exhorts him: 'Do not listen to persuasion, and do not make yourself weak by seeking reconciliation.' The Evil One laughs at him even as he entices him, since he has acquired him as a servant who does his bidding. [His servant] is not aware that he has been bought for nothing, and does not perceive that his understanding is blind. He schemes and entices him with all [kinds of] tricks. He puts out crumbs for him as for a bird. The heart of an inexperienced bird rejoices when it sees the crumbs concealed in the mouth of the snare. In its inexperience, it approaches to eat the crumbs, and the snare closes suddenly on it as it tries to escape. The skilled hunter is then happy with his lot in life, since his waiting was not in vain. Thus it is with the person who loves contention and jealousy: the Evil One inflates and fills him with his bitter fruits. He seduces and entices him like the bird that comes down to the crumbs, on which the snare suddenly closes. And after he catches him with the sweetness of his enticements, he teaches him arguments that he has not heard before. He is taught judgement, and is pounded with words; damaging arguments besiege his mind. He forgets that he has learned

good things, and they disappear from his heart, but what belongs to [the Evil One] he guards within him like a hidden treasure. Evil sinews are firmly established in his mind, and it is only with great difficulty that his claws[239] are pulled out, like a lion over its prey. A wise doctor with many remedies pulls out the claws of [the Evil One] from his heart. For as long as days continue, when evil thoughts are in a person his heart gives birth to evil fruit, and his tongue formulates divisive arguments. The desire for evil is sweet, and the thought of it is seductive, but the end result of [this desire] is more bitter than the venom of the serpent. There is no remedy but peace for the healing of the one who holds wrath in his heart: then he can submit to his brother and endure being wronged by his friend. When the fruits of peace are offered, his jealous thoughts will pass away; they will not be remembered nor will they return to the heart.

44. Friends! Our own sins are quite enough for us without [our] being impeded by many stumbling blocks! For a brother meets his friend and turns his face down and withholds a greeting, but if a godless pagan should happen to meet him, the first thing he does is ask after his well-being. O blindness darkening the mind! O drowsiness and sleep of death! How can we excuse ourselves? For if a wicked and lawless but rich man should meet us, we bow down before him and inquire as to his well-being, but the Evil One, in his envy, takes away from us the greeting for our brothers and friends. Our Lord commanded, *"Love one another,"* [240] and the blessed apostle admonished on [the subject of] love.[241] And Moses, the foundation of the prophets, said, *"Do not hate or sin [against] your brother in your heart."* [242] Some people among us hate in their hearts and speak foolishly with their lips. Our Lord has opened before us a great treasure full of all good things. In it is love, peace, friendship, healing, purity, and all manner of good, beautiful, and excellent things.

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[239] *B*: "his hidden things"
[240] John 15:12
[241] 1Corinthians 13
[242] Leviticus 19:17

He has given authority to his stewards over all the treasure-house, and has also placed chains, prisons, and fetters into the hands of the stewards, and authorized them to bind and to set free. But the stewards have forsaken love and peace and friendship and all the rest of the treasure. They have become prison wardens, prosecutors, and executioners, instead of stewards of the treasure of all good things. Whoever enters in is imprisoned, and whoever goes out is detained. Then there is the one who sins and offends God, but tries to please the prison wardens, and they free him from his chains and say to him, "God is compassionate and forgives sins. Enter, and go to prayer!" But if anyone offends them, even by some insignificant thing,[243] they say to him, "You are a prisoner, and are excommunicated from heaven and from earth. Woe to the one who speaks with you!" We hope, brothers, that when the King sees his stewards, who have transgressed the Law and changed the commandment which he gave to them and established their own decrees, he will bind them with the fetters that they so loved, demand payment from them for the blood of his servants, and take away from them his treasure, because they did not cherish it. Our Lord taught, *"If your brother offends you, rebuke him, [just] between you and him, and if he repents, forgive him. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two [others], so that the whole matter might be established in the eyes of two or three witnesses. And if he does not listen to these, speak to the congregation, and if he does not listen to the congregation, you must look upon him as an unbeliever or a tax collector, since he has not accepted [your] argument."* [244] But with us, we do not lodge complaints with each other, nor before two or three [witnesses], nor [before] the congregation. There is no judgement or accusation, only 'Imprisoned!' or 'Excommunicated!' Our Lord also said, *"If an offender offends you seventy times seven times, forgive him in one day."* [245] Who is [this] person, whose sins are so many that in one day he offends his friend four hundred and ninety times? But even when he has committed this many offences, our Lord has commanded [us] to forgive. But we have not forgiven

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[243] A has "prayer" instead of "thing"
[244] Matthew 18:15-17
[245] Matthew 18:22; Luke 17:3-4

one offence in four hundred and ninety days! And we are dying in our sins by holding grudges, apart from our other offences!

45. Brothers! We have written these few words of peace and reconciliation to you because of this disturbance that has come upon us at present time, so that we might be partakers of your peace. And [we also write] to our brothers in various places, where this controversy and division has reached them. But if anyone does not receive these words of ours, we will not feel oppressed nor will we separate ourselves, since, with those whom the world did not consider worthy[246] in various times, there is found, in their teachings, evil people who stood against them, accused them of wrongdoing, and quarreled with their words. The assembly of the wicked accused Moses of wrongdoing and stood against him. It was also Jeremiah's own brothers who hated him and threw him in the pit. When he was rebuking his people for their sins, they spoke against him: *"This man is not seeking the welfare of this people, and he is weakening the hands of the soldiers."* [247] And also from Babylon, false prophets sent [word] to the priests of Jerusalem: "Keep Jeremiah from prophesying."[248] And when he saw their indignation, that they did not receive his words, he said, *'I said, 'I will not speak in the name of the Lord, and I will not call to mind his word.' But it was in my mouth like a flame that was kindled and burned in my bones.*[249] *I tried to endure, but I could not."* [250] The Lord also once commanded Ezekiel and said to him, *"They are placing chains on you and binding you with them, and when they have done this to you, you will be silent and will no longer be a rebuker of them, for your mouth will stick to the roof of your mouth."* [251] At another time he said, *"My mouth has been opened and it will not be closed again."* [252] They also said to Amos, *"Do not prophesy in the name of the*

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[246] Hebrews 11:38
[247] Jeremiah 38:4
[248] Cf. Jeremiah 11:21
[249] A: "in my lips"
[250] Jeremiah 20:9
[251] Ezekiel 3:25-26
[252] Ezekiel 33:22

Lord, and do not teach those of the house of Isaac," [253] but he did not cease from his prophesying. Baruch son of Nerea wrote down the holy words from the mouth of Jeremiah, but when Zedekiah the king heard them, he burned them completely in the fire, because there was a reproof in them.[254] Jeremiah wrote and added to [his words], but they did not receive correction and did not repent of their sins, and received from the king of Babylon the punishment they deserved as lawbreakers. And again, God said to all the prophets, *"I have cut off my prophets and killed them by the word of my mouth, and the children of Israel have not turned from their sins."* [255] Furthermore, our Lord was called 'Samaritan' by his people, and they named him 'Beelzebub', as if there was a demon in him.[256] And when Paul was teaching they called him a 'babbler.'[257] It was not only that their words were not accepted: they were also tormented by them with beatings and scourgings,[258] even to the point of death. The people rose up against Moses to stone him.[259] Ahab sent Micaiah to prison.[260] They threw Jeremiah into a filthy pit.[261] They threw chains on Ezekiel.[262] They siezed our Lord, abused him, found him guilty of wrongdoing, and hung him on the Cross. And Paul was at various times imprisoned, stoned, and lowered in a basket from a wall.[263] All of these abuses they endured at the hands of their own people, but they had no sadness in their trials, because their building was established on the true foundation. There were few who rejected them and many who received them;[264] they live through

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[253] Amos 7:16
[254] Jeremiah 36:23
[255] Hosea 6:5
[256] Matthew 10:25; John 8:48
[257] Acts 17:18
[258] *B* omits "with beatings and scourgings"
[259] Exodus 17:4; Numbers 14:10; Psalm 68:28
[260] 1Kings 22:27
[261] Jeremiah 38:6
[262] Ezekiel 3:25; 4:8
[263] Acts 9:25
[264] *B* omits "and many who received them"

their words, and their good name is established for endless generations.

46. Our Lord is the sower, and we are the earth receiving the seed. The sower filled his hand and threw [seed] on his earth. Some of it fell among thistles, some fell on rock, and some of it a bird ate. But some fell in good earth which had been ploughed, so that when it grew and came up it produced fruit, one hundred, sixty, or thirty times [what was planted]. Observe that in [only] one of the four portions the seed was preserved and produced fruit. One of the portions fell among strangling thistles. One of the portions fell on the rock, where the sun, in its brilliance, dried it up. And a bird ate one portion, which is the evil, ravenous bird. But one portion fell on ploughed earth, and took in water and produced fruit.

47. Friends! Though we are sinners and unworthy, nevertheless it is on this foundation that we build, and this leaven that we have received. The seed of our Lord has fallen on our earth, and we have received money from the rich merchant.[265] His Spirit has been poured out on everyone, and his kindness is not held back from anyone.[266] If it should happen that someone scoffs at us and does not receive what we have written, he does not injure us thereby, nor does he gain [anything]. Our words demonstrate profit for those who listen, for we have written nothing to you that is outside of the Law,[267] nor have we sent a stolen treasure to you, but rather from the seed and the dough of the holy writings. False money is not accepted, no matter where it goes, and old yeast is not mixed with good flour.[268] For old wineskins do not receive strong wine, and when a new patch is sewn on an worn garment, it causes it to tear.[269] The vine which is tended produces fruit and not wild

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[265] Luke 19:12

[266] Joel 3:1; Acts 2:17

[267] In 20.17 "thieves, murderers, liars, and servants of hatred" are described as being "outside the Law".

[268] 1Corinthians 5:6

[269] Matthew 9:16-17; Mark 2:21-22; Luke 5:36-38

grapes, but the heart which is hard is like the rock which dries out the seed. The rain carries away the building that is placed on sand,[270] and it falls in the wind. The serpent eats salt that has lost its taste, and the fisherman throws away the bad fish.[271] For the weeds are pulled up at their appointed time,[272] and at the end the straw is separated from the wheat.[273] The lazy worker is ashamed at the time of payment, and the foolish virgins who lack oil when the Bridegroom comes are not able to buy [any].[274] The master of the steward who beats his fellow servants comes and passes judgement on him.[275] The wicked servant hides his master's money, and the one who gave it to him comes and demands interest with it.[276] The gatekeeper who loves sleep will be deprived of life at the time of awakening.[277] The wise king sends ambassadors and seeks peace while the battle is far away.[278]

48. We have written these few reminders to you, friends. And if anyone mocks us or scoffs at us, we will not find fault with him, for he [merely] brings forth the fullness of his heart, and labours and gives birth to the conceptions of his thought. Each person propounds and brings out and speaks from what he has stored away. What can the person who has no gold give to you from his treasure? The rich man who possesses all [kinds of] treasures brings them out and gives to those who ask. But the poor man brings out tin and lead from what he possesses, and has dealings with false merchandise.[279] Every tree brings forth its fruit in the summer. That which brings forth wild grapes is uprooted from the vineyard

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[270] Matthew 7:26-27; Luke 6:49
[271] Matthew 13:47-48
[272] Matthew 13:40
[273] Matthew 3:12; Luke 3:17
[274] Matthew 25:9-10
[275] Matthew 24:49-50; Luke 12:45-46
[276] Matthew 25:25-28
[277] Mark 13:35
[278] Luke 14:31-32
[279] Syr. ܘܡܬܚܠܛ ܒܢܦܩܐ ܕܙܐܦܐ

and becomes fuel for the fire. The master of the vine that produces good fruit prunes it and cultivates it even more.[280] But the vine that brings forth wild grapes is of the planting of Sodom, whose grapes are bitter.[281] One does not gather grapes from thistles nor figs from thorn bushes, for a good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit.[282] A good tree is not able to produce bad fruit nor a bad tree good fruit. A good man brings forth from the good treasures which are in his heart and speaks good things, while the evil man brings forth from the fullness of his heart and speaks evil things, since it is from the fullness of the heart that the lips speak, as our Saviour taught and said. For each person brings forth from what is his, and professes according to what he has attained. The person who is full of commotion believes that there is no treasure more excellent than his. When peace comes[283] it removes quarrelling; controversy ceases and the Evil One is deprived of his treasure.

49. Brothers! The world does not lack anything, and is full of all kinds [of people]: the good and the evil, the rich and the poor, the sweet and the bitter, the luminous and the dark, the righteous and the sinful, the just and the wicked. Everyone stands facing everyone else. And there is no perfection in this world, because the One who separates must come and separate the straw and uproot the weeds. For at the present time, the weeds are mixed with the wheat, and the good with the evil. The righteous are not separated from the sinful, nor the just from the wicked, nor the foolish from the wise. But at that time, the Lord of the harvest will give the order and the wheat will be gathered and the weeds pulled up. The righteous will depart to life and the wicked will go to darkness. The wise will enter in with the Bridegroom, but the foolish ones will be held back. Money will be taken from the evil servants, and the good servants will inherit their talents [of silver]. All who have

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[280] John 15:2
[281] Deuteronomy 32:32
[282] Matthew 7:16-20; Luke 6:43-45
[283] A omits "when peace comes"

searched will find what they have asked for, and each person who has sown will gather in [the fruit of] his labour. We are confident, brothers, that you are pursuing peace and removing dissension and quarrelling and envy and jealousy and division. Each person does not immediately see himself when he is behaving badly, just as he is not able to see his own appearance. Thus it seemed [good] to us, according to what we have understood at the present time, to remind you of the way of life of the ancients, of how good the diligent and the perfect were, and how evil the foolish were, those who sowed dissension. You are peacemakers: love peace so that you might receive a reward from the Lord of peace, and partake of the blessing that our Saviour gave. For when he gave the blessing to the crowd, he said, *"Blessed are those who make peace, for they will be called children of God."* [284]

50. This letter is written in the month of Shebat, in year six hundred and fifty-five of the kingdom of Alexander son of Phillip the Macedonian, and in the thirty-fifth year of Shapur, king of Persia. May the one who has laboured and written be kept in good memory, as well as the one who hears and is persuaded by good advice, and pursues peace and does not provoke quarrelling. For those who quarrel are called 'children of Cain', but peacemakers are brothers of Christ, children of the Father in heaven, who inherit the kingdom.

The demonstration in response to dissension is completed.

[284] Matthew 5:9

DEMONSTRATION 15: *ON DISTINCTIONS AMONG FOODS*

I. CONTENTS

1 Christ's teaching: food provides energy for the body, and no foods are impure in themselves
2 Paul's teaching: all of God's creatures are suitable for food, if they are consecrated
3 food prohibitions were given to keep the Israelites from bowing down to the idols of Egypt
4 further proof that the Israelites bowed down to the idols of Egypt; God commanded them to offer sheep and oxen because these were deities in Egypt
5 Samson and Elijah show that foods are not unclean in themselves
6 though God commanded them to sacrifice their former idols, the Israelites still went astray
7 God has no need of sacrifices or offerings, and rejected them when they did not restrain his people from idolatry; instead of sacrifices, God requires righteousness and compassion
8 the "ten holy commandments" are of lasting value, but the purity laws, which came later and whose burden Christ has removed, were temporary and ineffective
9 closing statement, and promise to write on further topics

II. TRANSLATION

1. The minds of childish and ignorant people are greatly troubled by what goes into the mouth, that which cannot defile a person.

Those who are distressed about these things speak as follows: 'God distinguished and showed to his servant Moses clean and unclean foods. He informed Moses, 'These are appropriate for eating, but these are properly [considered] unclean.' He admonished him concerning land animals,[1] flying creatures, and fish in the sea, according to their species.' On these [topics], my friend, I will give you, as far as I am able, a brief argument that [distinctions among] foods are of no benefit to those who observe them, nor are they harmful to those who make use of them. For the mouth of the Holy One testified, *"It is not what goes into a person that defiles him, but what comes out from a person; this is what defiles him."* [2] Our Saviour said this to cut down the argument of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, since they were boasting about immersion,[3] purity, the washing of their hands, and distinctions among foods. He then rebuked them:*"Blind Pharisees! Why do you wash the outside of the cup and plate, while the inside is full of wickedness and violence? You resemble sepulchres, which are white on the outside and look beautiful, but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and every impurity."* [4] He clearly showed them that their immersions and purifications were no help to them. He said to them, *"Evil thoughts exist in the heart, and it is these evil thoughts that exist in the heart that defile a person, not foods. Foods go to the stomach, and from there are expelled as excrement,*[5] *but a person is not defiled by them."* [6] [As for] all those meals that are wholesome and pleasing to the palate, and good for smelling and seeing and tasting, if a person eats [one] of these his palate alone is aware of their pleasing flavours, and from

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[1] Syr. ܚܝܘܬܐ . This literally means "living things", but there seems to be a contrast here with "flying creatures" and "fish of the sea". The phrase in Genesis is "every living thing that moves upon the earth", which is what I have used "land animal" to represent.

[2] Matthew 15:11; cf. Mark 7:15

[3] A: "immersions". The same word (ܡܥܡܕܢܐ) is used by Aphrahat to refer to Christian baptism.

[4] Matthew 23:25-27

[5] Syr. ܡܥܒܪܐ , the same word used for "purification" a few lines above. One is purified by expelling waste.

[6] Matthew 15:17-20

there his stomach receives them and distributes its energy to all the arteries and parts of the body. When the food goes down, instead of [having] a pleasant smell, it is changed and becomes sewage. Instead of [having] a good taste and beautiful appearance, it is changed [to having] an ugly appearance and is expelled as excrement. If a person eats black bread, which [has] neither a beautiful appearance nor a pleasant taste nor a desirable smell, it travels by the [same] path in the person, and gives energy to all the arteries and parts [of the body], and from there is expelled as excrement. As it happens, pleasant food is changed more [by changing] to sewage than that which is not wholesome or pleasant, but in these things there is neither sin nor righteousness.

2. The blessed apostle also cut down the argument of those who boast about foods. To those who take pride in this way of thinking, who reject and avoid [certain] foods, he said, *"Foods will not establish us before God. If we eat, we do not gain, and if we do not eat, we are not diminished."* [7] For if a person consumes all [kinds of] nourishment and meals and excels in doing what is right, and if he makes use of God's creation without greed and receives [God's] gift in faith, there is no sin or wrongdoing in him. But if he eats dust like a snake and is infected with the venom of the snake,[8] there is no benefit or profit for him. All of God's creatures are excellent, and none of them are to be rejected; they are sanctified by the word of God and by prayer. This [word] that the apostle spoke, my friend,[9] he spoke against those of his [own] people, when he saw that they

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[7] 1Corinthians 8:8

[8] The term ܡܪܬܐ is used only three times elsewhere, all in demonstation 14 (14.12; 14.37; 14.43), and always occurs in the phrase "venom of the serpent". In 14.12 the Church leaders so vehemently criticized by Aphrahat are described as being "infected with the venom of the serpent". Thus the various "nourishment and meals" of the last sentence here in demonstration 15 are set in contrast with the "dust" of the serpent in this sentence. In contrast to "God's creation", there is "no benefit or profit" in such "food".

[9] A: "my friends"

declared unclean the foods of the peoples. For the Israelites do not in any way make use of any of the foods that the peoples prepare, nor do they drink any wine [whose grapes] the peoples have pressed out. [This is] because the ungodly peoples sacrifice and call to mind the names of their idols over all that they press out and all that they thresh. For this reason the Israelites do not make use of their foods, and this indicates a weak conscience.[10] The apostle cut down the argument of those who stand [committed] to this [way of] thinking. He said, *"All foods are sanctified by the word of God and by prayer."* [11] For when a person makes use of the creatures of God, before he is nourished by them he remembers and glorifies and blesses and sanctifies the name of the Maker of [these] creatures, and he prays. They are then sanctified, and the power of the Evil One flees from them. The apostle also said, *"If a person among the ungodly invites you to a banquet and you want to go, eat whatever is set before you with a [clear] conscience."* [12]

3. As much as I am able, my friend, I will expound to you concerning these things. The Holy One, our God, did not distinguish foods for the Israelites so that any righteousness might belong to them [through this]. Rather, because of their greed and licentiousness he found this way to keep them from worshipping [idols] and from the sins that they were committing in the land of Egypt. In ancient times, when he made humans, God commanded Adam and his descendants and Noah and his progeny as follows: *"I have given you the land animals, the flying creatures, and all flesh. Let their blood run onto the ground and [then] eat, and they will be considered as vegetables for you. It is only the blood that you may not eat. Rather, pour it onto the ground like water, since the blood is the soul."* [13] God commanded these things for early generations, but he did not distinguish foods for them.

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[10] 1Corinthians 8:7

[11] 1Timothy 4:5

[12] 1Corinthians 10:27

[13] Genesis 1:29-30; 9:3-4; Leviticus 17:13-14; Deuteronomy 12:16. Aphrahat seems to leave open the possibility that God still requires people to avoid eating blood.

Now, if there was any sin or transgression of the Law in [certain] foods, in ancient times [God] would have distinguished the unclean from the clean for Adam and Noah, just as he admonished them and and said to them, *"Do not eat the blood, but you may slaughter and eat all flesh, and they will be considered as vegetables for you."* He also commanded Abraham and his offspring not to make use of [any] unclean [thing]. We know, however, that all just and righteous people in previous generations, up to Moses (who distinguished foods for Israel), made use of every food that the soul does not loathe, without sinning. [God] commanded the Israelites and distinguished foods for them because they had turned aside to the worship of the Egyptians and had abandoned the God of their fathers (the Egyptians worshipped oxen and calves). I will [now] explain this matter to you. When the brothers of Joseph came to him, he commanded his steward to prepare a meal for them. When it was time to recline [at the table], it is written that *"They set [a table] for him by himself, and for his brothers by themselves, and for the Egyptians who were eating with him by themselves. The Egyptians could not eat a meal with the Hebrews, since this was unclean for them."* [14] From ancient times, until they went to Egypt, the Israelites ate all [kinds of] flesh, but the Egyptians did not eat the flesh of sheep and oxen, which were their gods. When Jacob went down to Egypt, Jacob selected five of his brothers and presented them to Pharoah. He had commanded them, *"When Pharoah questions you and says to you, 'What is your occupation?', say to him, 'Your servants are shepherds of sheep and masters of herds, [as] our fathers [were] also.' When you speak to him like this, he will honour you, since shepherds are [included] in the worship of the Egyptians. He will give you the land of Goshen, a good place of pasture, and reject you*[15] *without taking you and appointing you to his workforce."* As it is written, *"The Egyptians send all shepherds of sheep away."* [16] It is also written that when Moses said to Pharoah, *"We are going to sacrifice to the Lord our God in the wilderness,"* Pharoah said to him, *"Serve the Lord your God in the land of Egypt!"* Moses said to him, *"We cannot follow this order, since if we sacrifice the*

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[14] Genesis 43:32
[15] They are rejected from the workforce of Pharoah.
[16] Genesis 46:33-34

animals of the Egyptians before their eyes, they will stone us." [17] It is also written, *"The Lord brought judgement upon the gods of the Egyptians"* [18] when he destroyed [their] herds of sheep and herds of oxen with hail and plague. The Egyptians owned herds of sheep and oxen in order to make use [of them], but they certainly did not eat them, since they worshipped them. The food of the Egyptians, even to this day, is the flesh of pigs and fish, which are abundant in their land. Thus, when the Israelites desired food, they said, *"We remember the fish that we ate freely in Egypt, along with the smell of onions, garlic, leeks, cucumbers, and melons."* [19] The Israelites followed the customs of the Egyptians, eating their foods and worshipping their gods.

4. In order for you to know [with certainty] that [the Israelites] practised idolatry in the land of Egypt and worshipped their gods, [recall that] Joshua son of Nun, when he was about to die, called the Israelites [to himself] and said to them, *"Choose today whom you will serve: the gods that your fathers (Terah the father of Abraham and his father Nahor) served on the far side of the river, or the gods that you served in the land of Egypt. I and the members of my household, however, will worship the Lord God."* Again he admonished them, *"Choose today whom you will serve."* They said to him, *"We will worship the Lord and serve him, because he is our God."* He said to them, *"Take note: perhaps you will not be able to serve the Lord!"* And they said, *"We are able."* He said to them, *"You are bearing witness to yourselves that you have chosen to serve the Lord."* And they said, *"We are bearing witness."* [20] For further confirmation that [the Israelites] worshipped sheep and oxen in Egypt, notice that when Moses remained on the mountain, they turned away from the Lord and worshipped idols. They constructed no figures for themselves to worship except the figure of a calf, which is what they were used to worshipping in the land of Egypt, and they reveled and feasted before before the calf that they had made. Moreover, when Jereboam, son of Nabat, led them astray, he made

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[17] Exodus 8:20, 25, 26
[18] Numbers 33:4
[19] Numbers 11:5
[20] Joshua 24:15-22

a calf for them to worship, which is what they had worshipped in Egypt. When the Holy One saw that they had not yet been cleansed of the leaven of the Egyptians and that they remained in an idolatrous way of thinking, he then commanded Moses to distinguish foods for them. He made unclean for them that which had been clean for them to eat in the land of Egypt, and he instructed them to eat that which they had worshipped and not eaten in the land of Egypt. Because of their evil inclination, he also commanded them to bring that which they had worshipped as an offering before him, even though they did not want to eat the flesh of sheep and oxen, since they had been sacrifices. Notice that when he distinguished many animals as pure, among all of them he commanded that they bring as offerings only sheep and oxen. Be convinced, my friend, that the boasting of Israel about their distinctions among foods is empty.

5. Speak to me, O scribe, wise debater of the people! If Israel is unclean when they offer or make use of anything that the Law declares unclean, why did Samson, the nazirite, the hero of Israel, take honey from an unclean beast, from the skeleton of a lion, eating it and pouring it on his hands?[21] [This] was no wrongdoing, and no censure was [given] to him because of this deed. It is not written that he was made unclean. Furthermore, when he had achieved a victory using the jawbone of a donkey and piled up a heap of Philistines, he was thirsty and prayed before his God. He said, *"Lord God! You have achieved this great victory through the hand of your servant. Will I now die of thirst?"* [22] God heard the prayer of Samson and he made water flow from the jawbone of the donkey. [Samson] drank and his thirst was relieved. Now if there was any uncleanness or wrongdoing in the jawbone of a donkey (which was unclean according to the Law), why did he make water flow for his nazirite to drink from [this] jawbone? If this was unclean, it would have been appropriate for him to make [water] flow for him from a rock, just as he made water come out of a rock for the Israelites in the wil-

[21] Judges 14:8-9
[22] Judges 15:18

derness,[23] or as he made [water] come out of the earth for Hagar, and Ishmael drank.[24] And if there is uncleanness in foods, among all the birds there are none more unclean and impure than the ravens, who carried bread and meat to Elijah, the holy prophet, when he lived by the Wadi Cherith.[25] Where were the ravens carrying the food of Elijah from, if not from Jerusalem? The priests would set the portion that belonged to him to one side, and in faith would give it to the ravens. They would pick it up and take it to Elijah at the command of the Most High, his God. The nourishment of Elijah was pure, even though he received it from the mouths of ravens, from birds that the Law declares unclean.

6. Know, my friend, that in order for him to cut down their argument (so that they would not worship calves, the idols of the Egyptians), he distinguished foods for them and commanded them to bring offerings of what they had idolized in the land of Egypt. God had no need of sacrifices and offerings. But in order that they might be restrained, through offerings, from worshipping the gods of the peoples when they mixed themselves among them (just as they had worshipped the gods of Egypt when they went and mixed among them), he bound them and restrained them in the following way: they would present their offerings and sacrifices on his altar. Though he strongly admonished them, they turned aside from him and worshipped and served the gods of the peoples and corrupted their ways. [This was] just as Moses had said: *"I know that after I die you will certainly corrupt and turn aside from the way that I have commanded for you, and many evils will come upon you at the end of days."* [26]

7. Be persuaded that God had no need of sacrifices and offerings, or [any] burnt offering or incense, yet through these things [the Israelites] were restrained. But when they turned themselves away, and through the sacrifices that he had given them began to

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[23] Exodus 17:6
[24] Genesis 21:19
[25] 1Kings 17:6
[26] Deuteronomy 31:29

sacrifice to idols, he then said to them through the prophet, *"The abundance of your sacrifices is useless to me, says the Lord."* [27] He also said to them, *"I reject your burnt offerings, and my soul hates your New Moon [celebrations] and your festivals."* [28] And David said, *"I do not eat the flesh of young bulls, nor do I drink the blood of young goats. Instead of these things, sacrifice thanksgiving to God, and fulfill your vows to the Most High. When you have done this, call to me on the day of trouble; I will strengthen you and you will glorify me."* [29] Again, it is written in the prophet, *"I hate and reject your festivals, and I am not aware of your religious assemblies."* It is also written, *"Even if you bring me offerings, I will not look at the multitude of your fattened animals."* [30] He also said, *"Did you, children of Israel, present sacrifices and offerings to me [during] the forty years in the desert?"* [31] *"And if you eat and drink, is it not you eating and drinking? says the Lord."* [32] Furthermore, Isaiah said, *"Whoever slaughters a lamb is like someone who slaughters a dog, and whoever offers a bull is like someone who slaughters a man. Whoever offers frankincense [is] like [someone who offers] the blood of a pig, and whoever prays before me is like someone who blesses idols."* [33] When he heard the sound of the sheep and the oxen that was coming from the Amalekites, Samuel said to Saul, *"What is this sound that I hear?"* Saul said to him, *"The people are reserving the best of the sheep in order to sacrifice to the Lord your God."* And Samuel said to him, *"Obedience is better than sacrifices, and taking heed [is better] than the fat of fattened animals."* [34] It also says, *"The Lord does not want the burnt offerings of sinners."* [35] Furthermore, it is written that *"the wickedness of the house of Eli will never be atoned for through sacrifices and offerings."* [36] It is also written, *"The Lord is not pleased with rams, or with myriads of hosts*

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[27] Isaiah 1:11
[28] Isaiah 1:13-14
[29] Psalm 49:13-15
[30] Amos 5:22
[31] Amos 5:25
[32] Zechariah 7:6
[33] Isaiah 66:3
[34] 1Samuel 15:14, 15, 22
[35] Proverbs 15:8
[36] 1Samuel 3:14

of heifers.[37] *Instead of these things, I will show you, [O] human, what is useful, that which the Lord requires: you should do what is right, seek faith, and be prepared to follow after your God."* [38] Moreover, when he rejected sacrifices and offerings in the days of Isaiah, he said, *"I will show you what I am requesting. Withdraw from evils and learn to do good; seek out what is right and do good to those who have been wronged. Give justice to the orphans, and give justice to the widows. When you have done these things, come, and let us speak with one another, says the Lord. And if your sins are like crimson, they will become as white as snow; if they are as red as scarlet, they will become like wool."* [39] Malachi said, *"Do not raise up [sacrifices] on my altar in vain, for I am not pleased with you, says the Lord."* [40] And Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, *"Remove your sins through almsgiving, and your wickedness though compassion for the weak,"* [41] but not through sacrifices and offerings. For he rejected the Israelites and rejected their offerings, as Jeremiah said, *"He called them 'rejected silver', since the Lord has rejected them."* [42] He also said, *"I will make them go out from before my face, and they will go out. If they say, 'Where will we go?', say to them, '[Those destined] for the sword, to the sword; [those destined] for famine, to famine; [those destined] for captivity, to captivity.'"* [43] Again, it is written, *"He will regard them no more."* [44] And Isaiah said, *"Separate from them and call them 'unclean'."* [45] Jeremiah also said, *"I have abandoned my house! I have abandoned my inheritance! I have given my soul's beloved* [46] *into the hands of her enemies!"* [47] It is also written, *"I have given the daughter of my people a*

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[37] Syr. ܪ̈ܒܘܬܐ ܕܚܝܠܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ; literally: "myriads of the host of heifers". The canonical text refers to 'rivers of oil' (the Syriac word for oil is ܡܫܚܐ).

[38] Micah 6:7-8

[39] Isaiah 1:16-18

[40] Malachi 1:10

[41] Daniel 4:27

[42] Jeremiah 6:30

[43] Jeremiah 15:1-2

[44] Lamentations 4:16

[45] Lamentations 4:15

[46] A: "the beloved of my house"

[47] Jeremiah 12:7

letter of divorce." [48] Again, it is written, *"The Lord has caused festivals and Sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion."* [49] Furthermore, through the prophet Ezekiel he clearly showed them that it was because of their contentiousness that he gave them sacrifices and offerings, so that perhaps they might be held back from their sins. He said to them, *"I have given them commandments and judgements, [and] made known to them that if a person does them, he will live through them."* [50] He also said, *"I have given them commandments which are not excellent, and judgements though which they will not live. I have defiled them through their gifts, when they present their offerings."* [51]

8. Be persuaded, O stubborn scribe of the Law, teacher of the people! For the mouth of the Holy One testifies that the commandments and judgements which were given to you are of no benefit and are not good. How is it that you can be so bold, hastening to argue? It was because of your sins that he instructed you to give offerings and distinguished foods for you. About which commandments and judgements did Ezekiel say, *"Whoever does them will live by them"*? And concerning which did he say, *"I have given you commandments that are not good and judgements by which [you] will not live"*? The life-giving commandments and judgements, on the other hand, are those which were written from above. [These are] the just and righteous judgements which he set before them, the ten holy commandments which he inscribed with his hand and gave to Moses so that he might teach them. But when they made a calf for themselves and turned away from following him, then he gave them commandments and judgements which were not good, [concerning] offerings as well as purification for lepers, discharges, menstruation, and childbirth. [It was] also [said] that no person should approach a dead body, or a grave, or bones, or those who have been killed, and that for all sins and all human uncleanness an offering should be brought. Concerning each one of these things he

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[48] Jeremiah 3:8
[49] Lamentations 2:6
[50] Ezekiel 20:11
[51] Ezekiel 20:25-26

said, *"He will be unclean until the evening,"* [52] even if he has washed with water. Truly, according to these things that were written, there was not even one day in which the Israelites were purified from sins, but they spent all their days in sins and impurity. They were not able to be made righteous through the Law, as the apostle said, *"A person is not made righteous through the Law, but whoever does the things written in it will live by them."* [53] But it is known that no person is able to do them or keep them. Our Lord, when he saw that they were difficult,[54] called to us and said to us, *"Come to me, you who are weary and carrying burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon yourselves, for my yoke is light and pleasant."* [55] We confess the mercy which removed a hard and difficult yoke from us and gave us his, [which is] easy and pleasant.

9. I have written these few reminders to you, my friend, because the people of the Jews exalt themselves and take pride in and boast about [the fact] that they declare unclean and distinguish [certain] foods. It is in these three things, among others, that they take pride: circumcision, keeping the Sabbath, and distinctions among foods. I have written briefly and explained to you these three [concerns] of theirs, as I have understood [matters].[56] On the others, I will write to you and instruct you from time to time as God gives [insight] to me.

The demonstration on distinctions among foods is completed.

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[52] Leviticus 15:5

[53] Galatians 3:11-12

[54] *B*: "when he rejoiced, called…"

[55] Matthew 11:28-30

[56] It seems odd that Aphrahat does not mention the Passover here, having devoted a demonstration to it alongside these other three.

DEMONSTRATION 16: *ON THE PEOPLES IN PLACE OF THE PEOPLE*

I. CONTENTS

1 from the time of Abraham, God has called the peoples, whom Christ teaches to be humble, peaceloving, and God-fearing
2 when the people rebelled, God gathered a new people from all peoples and languages
3 scriptural proof that both Israel and Judah have rebelled and have been abandoned by God
4 Israel has been erased from the Book of Life, but the people from the peoples has listened to the teaching of Christ and has turned from idolatry
5 God has rejected Israel, his firstborn, in favour of obedient children from the peoples
6 non Israelites more righteous than Israel: Jethro, the Gibeonites, Rahab, Obed-edom, Ittai, Ebed-melech, Ruth, Uriah
7 Christ is the true covenant who holds back all peoples from sinful ways
8 Jews boast in vain about being the people of God and the children of Abraham

II. TRANSLATION

1. Peoples of all tongues were called first, before Israel, to the inheritance of the Most High. As God said to Abraham, *"I have made you the father of a multitude of peoples."* [1] Moses proclaimed, *"The*

[1] Genesis 17:5

peoples will call to the mountain, and there they will offer sacrifices of righteousness." [2] And in the Hymn of Testimony he said to the people, *"I will provoke you with a people that is not a people, and through a foolish people I will make you angry."* [3] Our father Jacob testified concerning the peoples when he blessed Judah:[4] *"The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from among his progeny,*[5] *until he to whom the kingdom belongs comes, and the peoples will hope in him."* [6] Isaiah said, *"The mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the head of the mountains, higher than the high places, and all peoples will look for it. Many peoples will come from far away and say, 'Come! Let ascend the mountain of the Lord, and [go up] to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his paths, and we will walk in his ways, for the Law will go out from Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge among the peoples, and rebuke all the peoples who are far away."* [7] When he judges them and rebukes them, they will then accept correction, be changed, and humble themselves from their stubbornness: *"They will beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into sickles. [Never] again will a people lift the sword against [another] people, nor will they learn again [how to make] war."* [8] Since ancient times, the peoples who did not know God would fight against plunderers and exploiters with swords, spears, and lances. But when Christ, the Saviour, came, *"he broke the bow of war and spoke [of] peace with the peoples."*[9] He made them beat their swords into ploughshares and they made their spears into sickles so that they would eat from the work of their hands and not from plunder. It is also written, *"I will restore pure lip[s] to the peoples, so that they will all call upon the name of the*

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[2] Deuteronomy 33:19. Neusner (1971) gives an alternate translation: "The peoples will call to the mountain…"

[3] Deuteronomy 32:21

[4] *B*: "Jacob, when he blessed Judah, said…"

[5] Syr. ܡܒܕܩܢܐ ܡܢ ܒܝܬ ܪܓܠܘܗܝ . Literally: "a lawgiver from between his feet", but "between his feet" is a euphemistic reference to sexual potency.

[6] Genesis 49:10

[7] Isaiah 2:2-4

[8] Isaiah 2:4

[9] Zechariah 9:10

Lord." [10] From ancient times, the peoples did not have pure lips and did not call upon the name of the Lord, since with their lips they glorified the idols that their hands had made. They called upon the name[s] of their gods, but not on the name of the Lord. Furthermore, the prophet Zechariah said, *"Many strong peoples will join with the Lord."* [11] And the prophet Jeremiah openly and clearly proclaimed concerning the peoples when he said, *"The peoples will abandon their graven images and cry out and proclaim and say, '[These] deceptive idols that our fathers left us are nothing!'"* [12]

2. Jeremiah proclaimed to his people: *"Stand on the roads, and ask about the paths of the world! See which road is good and travel on it!"* But in their stubbornness they replied to him, *"We will not go!"* He also said to them, *"I have set up watchmen over you, so that you might hear the call of the trumpet."* But again they said to him, *"We will not listen!"* [13] Also in the days of Jeremiah, they did this, clearly and openly: when he proclaimed to them the word of the Lord, they replied, *"We will not listen to the word that you spoke to us in the name of the Lord! Rather, we will do what we want to do, and every word that comes out of our mouth[s] [will be for] offering incense to other gods."* [14] When he saw that they would not listen to him, he turned to the peoples, and said to them, *"Hear, [you] peoples, and know, [you] Church which is within them, and let the earth in its fullness hear!"* [15] When he saw that they stood rebelliously against him and insolently answered him, he then abandoned them, as had been prophesied [when] he said, *"I have abandoned my house! I have abandoned my inheritance! I have given my soul's beloved into the hands of her enemies, and in her place, my inheritance has become [like] a speckled bird*

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[10] Zephaniah 3:9
[11] Zechariah 2:11
[12] Jeremiah 16:19
[13] Jeremiah 6:16-17
[14] Jeremiah 44:16-17
[15] Jeremiah 6:18-19

of prey to me!" [16] This is the Church, which gathers together from all peoples and from all languages.[17]

3. In order for you to know that he has truly abandoned them, Isaiah said concerning them, *"You have abandoned your people, the house of Jacob."* [18] He called them 'Sodomites' and 'people of Gomorrah',[19] and in their place he brought the peoples and named them 'the house of Jacob.' Isaiah spoke and called the peoples by the name 'house of Jacob': *"Come, house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord,"* [20] for the people of the house of Jacob have been forsaken by him and have become rulers of Sodom and the people of Gomorrah. Their father [is] an Amorite and their mother a Hittite.[21] They changed and became a strange vine.[22] Their grapes are bitter grapes, and their clusters [have become] bitterness for them.[23] [They are] rebellious children[24] and rejected silver,[25] the vine of Sodom and the stock of Gomorrah,[26] and a vineyard that has produced wild grapes instead of grapes. [They are] a vine whose branches have been consumed by the fire, which is good for nothing, does not flourish, and can be put to no use.[27] Two [peoples] were called 'Jacob', one to walk in the light of the Lord and one to be abandoned. Instead of 'Jacob' they are called 'rulers of Sodom', and the people which is from the peoples is [now] called 'Jacob'. The prophet said concerning the peoples that they would present

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[16] Jeremiah 12:7-9

[17] Another hand has added in the margin of A: "I will raise for myself from the peoples priests and levites who will minister to me as a new heaven and as a new earth, says the Lord."

[18] Isaiah 2:6

[19] Isaiah 1:10

[20] Isaiah 2:5

[21] Ezekiel 16:3, 45

[22] Jeremiah 2:21

[23] Deuteronomy 32:32

[24] Isaiah 30:1

[25] Jeremiah 6:30

[26] Deuteronomy 32:32

[27] Ezekiel 15:4

offerings instead of the people: *"My name is great among the peoples, and in every place they present pure offerings in my name."* [28] Concerning Israel the prophet said, *"I am not content with your offerings."* [29] He also said, *"Your sacrifices are not pleasing to me."* [30] Furthermore, Hosea said concerning Israel, *"They seek the Lord falsely."* [31] Isaiah said, *"This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."* [32] And Hosea said, *"Ephraim has surrounded me with falsehood and the house of Israel and Judah with deceit, until the people of God have gone down."* [33] What people [is referred to], if not the righteous and faithful people? Since he said concerning Israel, *"He has surrounded me with falsehood and deceit",* and concerning Ephraim, *"A sinful kingdom has arisen in Israel from Ephraim",* and since the name of Judah is not mentioned in that passage, [the Jews] respond, 'Judah is the holy and faithful one who goes down and joins with the Lord.' But the prophet openly and clearly proclaimed, *"Ephraim and Israel have surrounded me with falsehood,"* since Jereboam son of Nabat openly turned them aside to [the worship of] the calf.[34] [He said] *"and Judah with deceit"* because they were worshipping idols deceitfully and secretly, when [God] showed Ezekiel their uncleanness.[35] Hosea proclaimed concerning them, when he named them 'promiscuous woman' and 'adulteress'. He said concerning the assembly of Israel, *"Remove her promiscuity from her face!'* And concerning the assembly of the house of Judah he said, *"Remove her adultery from between her breasts!"* [36] In order for you to know that he spoke about both assemblies and named them [both] 'promiscuous woman' and 'adulteress', he said after [that] passage, *"If you do not remove her promiscuity from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts, I will send her*

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[28] Malachi 1:11
[29] Jeremiah 6:20
[30] Jeremiah 6:20
[31] Hosea 5:7
[32] Isaiah 29:13
[33] Hosea 11:12
[34] 1Kings 12:26-33
[35] Ezekiel 8:5-18
[36] Hosea 2:2

out naked and abandon her, as on the day she was born, and like the day she came up from the land of Egypt." [37] [He refers to] both their assemblies: one of Israel and one of Judah. [The assembly] of Israel is the promiscuous woman, that of Judah is the adulteress, and the people that is from the peoples is the holy and faithful people that has gone down and joined with the Lord. And why does he say, *"gone down"*, if not because they have 'gone down' from their pride? Moreover, Ezekiel named [his people] 'Ohola' and 'Ohilibah', and he called their two assemblies two branches of the vine that the fire had consumed.[38] David also proclaimed concerning the peoples, *"The Lord will number the peoples in writing,"* [39] but concerning the Israelites he prophesied,[40] *"They will be erased from your Book of Life, and will not be written [down] with your righteous ones."* [41]

4. You should know, my friend, that the Israelites were written in the Book of the Holy One. As Moses said before God, *"Either forgive the wrongdoing of this people, or erase me from your Book that you have written."* But [God] said, *"I will erase from my Book whoever sins against me."* [42] When they sinned, David said of them, *"They will be erased from your Book of Life, and will not be written [down] with your righteous."* [43] But about the peoples he said, *"The Lord will number the peoples in a Book,"* [44] since the peoples were not inscribed in a book or in scripture. Observe, my friend, that the calling of the peoples was inscribed first, before the calling of the people. They sinned at various times in the wilderness, and [God] said to Moses, *"Let me wipe out this people, and I will make you into a people greater and more excellent than them."* [45] Since the time of the peoples had not come, however,

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[37] Hosea 2:2, 3, 15
[38] Ezekiel 23:4
[39] Psalm 87:6
[40] A: "he said"
[41] Psalm 69:28
[42] Exodus 32:32-33
[43] Psalm 69:28
[44] Psalm 87:6
[45] Exodus 32:10

and their Saviour was another [person], Moses was not convinced that there would be a Saviour and a Teacher for the people which is from the peoples, [a people] which is greater and more excellent than the people of Israel. For this great and excellent glory is fitting for the Son of God, as we call him. As Isaiah said, *"This is a small thing: that you will be a servant to me and restore the shoot of Jacob and establish the sceptre of Israel. But I am making you a light for the peoples, so that you might show my salvation to the ends of the earth."* [46] Isaiah also said concerning the peoples, *"Listen to me, peoples, and give heed to me, nations,*[47] *for the Law has gone out from before me and my judgement is a light to the peoples."* [48] And David said, *"The ear[s] of the children of strangers will hear me, and these children of strangers will be held back and prevented from [following their paths."* [49] The peoples had heard and had been prevented from [following] the ways [of God] because of reverence for images and idols.

5. If they say, 'He has called us children of strangers,' [be aware that] they were not called 'strangers' but children and heirs, as Isaiah said: *"I have raised and nurtured children, but they have risen against me."* [50] The prophet said, *"From Egypt I have called my son."* [51] The Holy One said to Moses, *"Say to Pharoah, 'Send my son away, so that he might serve me.'"* [52] He also said, *"Israel [is] my son, my firstborn."* [53] The peoples, however, are those who listen to God and who are prevented and held back from the ways of their sins. Isaiah said, *"You will call peoples who have not known you, and peoples who have not known you*

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[46] Isaiah 49:6

[47] Syr. ܐܡܘܬܐ (from a Hebrew root, and not listed in Payne-Smith)

[48] Isaiah 51:4

[49] Psalm 18:45-46

[50] Isaiah 1:2. Syr. ܘܗܢܘܢ ܐܥܠܝܘ ܒܝ . The verb here can me either 'raise up' (usually transitive) or 'act wickedly' (probably from the noun ܥܘܠܐ).

[51] Hosea 11:1

[52] Exodus 4:23

[53] Exodus 4:22

will come and turn toward you." [54] Isaiah also said, *"Hear what I have done, peoples, and know my might, distant ones!"* [55] Concerning the Church and the Assembly of the peoples, David said, *"Remember your Church, which you acquired long ago!"* [56] David also said, *"Glorify the Lord, all [you] peoples, and let the nations glorify his name!"* [57] And again he said, *"Sovereignty belongs to the Lord, and he is the Ruler of the peoples."* [58] Furthermore, the prophet said, *"In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people, and they will prophesy. A person will not teach his fellow-citizen or his brother by saying 'Know the Lord',*[59] *since all of them will know me, from the youngest to the oldest."* [60] Concerning the Israelites, [God] said, *"I will send a famine into the land, not a hunger for bread or a thirst for water, but [a hunger and thirst] for hearing the word of the Lord. They will go from west to east and from south to north to seek the word of the Lord, but they will not find it, since he has withdrawn it from them."* [61] Previously, Moses wrote concerning them, *"When many evil things happen to you in the end of days, you will say, 'These evil things have happened because God is not among us.'"* [62] Thus, in the days of Ezekiel they said, *"The Lord has abandoned the land, and the Lord will not see us again."* [63] And Isaiah said about them, *"Your offences make a distinction between you and your God, and your sins have held back good things from you."* [64] Again, [God] said, *"You will shout in my ears in a loud voice, but I will not hear you."* [65] And about the people which is from the peoples, David said, *"Clap your hands, all you peoples; glorify God with the sound of*

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[54] Isaiah 55:5
[55] Isaiah 33:13
[56] Psalm 74:2
[57] Psalm 117:1
[58] Psalm 22:28
[59] *B*: "Know our Lord"
[60] Jeremiah 31:34
[61] Amos 8:11-12
[62] Deuteronomy 31:17
[63] Ezekiel 8:18
[64] Isaiah 59:2
[65] Exodus 8:18

praise!" [66] He also said, *"Listen to this, all you peoples, and give heed, all who dwell on the earth!"* [67]

6. From ancient times, anyone from the peoples who pleased God was justified more than Israel. Jethro, a priest from the peoples, was blessed along with his progeny: *"His dwelling-place is secure, and his nest is set on a steep rock."* [68] Joshua welcomed the Gibeonites, [who were] from the unclean peoples. They entered and took refuge in the inheritance of the Lord, and became hewers of wood and drawers of water for the assembly and for the altar[69] of the Lord. When Saul sought to kill them, the sky was kept from raining until the sons of Saul were slaughtered, and then the Lord restored the land and blessed his inheritance.[70] Rahab, the prostitute who received the spies, received an inheritance in Israel, as did the household of her father.[71] Obed-edom, from Gath of the Philistines, into whose house the ark of the Lord went (and by whom it was honoured more than all of Israel), was blessed by the Lord, as was his household.[72] Ittai the Gittite supported David when he was persecuted, and his name and his progeny were honoured.[73] Ebed-melech, the Kushite, a faithful man, raised up Jeremiah from the pit when the Israelites, his [own] people, had imprisoned him.[74] This is what Moses said about them: *"The foreigner who is among you will be higher, and you will be lower."* [75] The imprisoned Jeremiah, the prophet, and made him go down to a pit, but Ebed-melech, the foreigner from Kush, raised Jeremiah up from the pit. Ruth, the Moabite, came from a people that had angered [God], but she joined herself

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[66] Psalm 47:1

[67] Psalm 49:1

[68] Numbers 24:21. The verse refers to the Kenites, with whom Jethro is identified elsewhere (Judges 1:16; 4:11).

[69] A omits "and for the altar"

[70] 2Samuel 21:1-9

[71] Joshua 6:25; cf. Hebrews 11:31

[72] 2Samuel 6:10-11; 1Chronicles 13:13-14

[73] 2Samuel 15:19-22

[74] Jeremiah 38:1-13

[75] Deuteronomy 28:33

to the people of Israel and from her progeny the rule of kings arose, from whom was born the Saviour of the peoples. Uriah the Hittite, from an unclean people, was prominent among the warriors of David. Because David killed him deceitfully in the war with the Ammonites and desired his wife and took her [for himself], he received a decree of judgement that the sword would not depart from his house forever.[76]

7. Moreover, Isaiah said concerning our Saviour, *"I have given you as a covenant for the people and as a light for the peoples."* [77] What kind of covenant was he for the people? From the time that he came, he was the light and salvation of the peoples, and from that time Israel was held back from worshipping idols, and he became a true covenant for them. On this [topic], Moses said, *"I will provoke you with a*[78] *people that is not a people, and through a foolish people I will anger you."* [79] They are provoked by us, and because of us they [no longer] worship idols, so that they will not be scorned by us, since we have abandoned idols and have called what our fathers left us 'falsehood'. They are angry and their hearts are broken because we have entered and become heirs in their place. This was their covenant: not to worship other gods. But they did not accept it. He provoked them with us, and light and life came to us, as he proclaimed when he taught, *"I am the light of the world."* [80] He also said, *"Believe while the light is with you, before the darkness overtakes you."* [81] And again, he said, *"Walk in the light, so that you might be called*[82] *'children of light.'"* [83] It also says concerning him, *"The light shone in the darkness."* [84] This is the covenant that the people had, and the light that shone for all the

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[76] 2Samuel 12:10
[77] Isaiah 42:6
[78] A: "with my people"
[79] Deuteronomy 32:21
[80] John 8:12. A has "I am the light of the world which is above"
[81] John 12:35
[82] A: "might be children of light"
[83] John 12:36
[84] John 1:5

peoples and prevented them and held them back from their perverse ways. As it is written: *"With his coming, the rough place will become smooth and the rugged place will become a plain. The glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh will see the life of God."* [85]

8. I have written this brief reminder about the peoples to you, my friend, because the Jews boast, 'We are the people of God and the children of Abraham.' We, however, will listen to John [the Baptist], who, when they boasted 'We are the children of Abraham' said to them, *"Do not take pride and say, 'Abraham is our father,' since God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones."* [86] Our Saviour said to them, *"You are the children of Cain, not the children of Abraham."* [87] And the apostle said, *"The branches that sinned were cut off, and we were grafted onto their places, and we have become participants in the best part of the olive tree. Let us not boast and sin, or else we too will be cut off. For we have certainly been grafted onto the olive tree."* [88] This is a response to the Jews, since they boast 'We are the children of Abraham and the people of God.'

The demonstration on the people and the peoples is completed.

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[85] Isaiah 40:4-5; Luke 3:5-6
[86] Matthew 3:9
[87] John 8:39, 44
[88] Romans 11:17-18

DEMONSTRATION 17: *ON CHRIST, WHO IS THE SON OF GOD*

I. CONTENTS

1 Jews accuse Christians of worshipping a human being
2 Christ is a man, but is honoured with the titles 'God' and 'Lord'
3 God made Moses a god to Pharoah and Aaron
4 Israel and Solomon given the title 'son of God'
5 God gives his name to whomever he wishes; though the Great King, he allows humans to be called 'kings'
6 though divinity, worship, kingship, and authority belong to God, he has allowed humans to share in these things
7 there is only one God: humans who know him become his temples, while those who do not are like animals
8 if Jews can honour wicked authorities in the world without censure, how much more should Christians honour Christ, who has taught them to worship the one God
9 the prophets foretold the coming of the Son of God
10 Daniel, David, and Zechariah foretold the coming of Christ
11 the many names of Christ
12 closing comment: Aphrahat writes in response to Jews

II. TRANSLATION

1. [This is] a response[1] to the Jews, who revile the people that is from the peoples. They speak as follows: 'You worship and serve a man who was born, a human being who was crucified, and you call

[1] Literally: "an equivalence of words"

a human being 'God'.[2] Though God has no son, you say that this crucified Jesus is the son of God. Yet [you] give as proof [the fact] that God said, *'I am God, and there is no other besides me,'* [3] and also, *'Do not worship another god.'* [4] Thus you stand against God and call[5] a human being 'God'.'

2. As much as I am able to understand in my deficiency, my friend, I will explain to you concerning these things. While we grant to them that he is a man, we also honour him and call him 'God' and 'Lord'. We do not call him [this] in a strange manner, and it is not a strange name that we place on him, one that does not occur among them. We are certain that Jesus our Lord is God son of God, and King son of the King, Light from Light, Creator and Counsellour, Guide and Way, Saviour and Shepherd, Gatherer and Gate, Pearl and Lamp. He is called by many names. We will leave all of them [to one side] and argue concerning him that he is the Son of God, and [that] he who has come from God is [also] God.

3. The honoured title of the divinity has also been placed on righteous people, and they have been worthy to be called by it. God called people in whom he was pleased 'my children' and 'my loved ones'. When God chose Moses, his loved one and friend, and made him chief and teacher and priest for his people, he called him a god. He said to him, *"I have made you a god for Pharoah,"* [6] and he gave him his priest as a prophet: *"Aaron, your brother, will speak for you with Pharoah. To him, you will be a god, and to you, he will be an interpreter."* [7] It was not only to Pharoah, who was evil, that he made Moses a god, but he also made him a god to Aaron, the holy priest.

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[2] *B*: "you call to a human being"
[3] Deuteronomy 32:39
[4] Exodus 34:14
[5] A: "because you call"
[6] Exodus 7:1
[7] Exodus 7:2

4. Listen further [to me] concerning [the fact] that we call him 'Son of God'. They say, 'Though God has no son, you made this crucified Jesus his son and firstborn.' Yet [God] called Israel 'my son' [and] 'my firstborn' when he addressed Pharoah through Moses: *"Israel [is] my firstborn son. Send [me] my son, so that he might serve me. If you do not wish to send him, I will kill your firstborn son."* [8] He also testified concerning this matter through the prophet when he rebuked the people: *"I called my son out of Egypt, but though I called him he went and worshipped Baal and offered incense to graven images."* [9] Isaiah said of them, *"I raised and nurtured children, but they rose up against me."* [10] It is also written, *"You are the children of the Lord your God."* [11] Concerning Solomon it says, *"He will be a son to me, and I will be his father."* [12] We, too, call this Christ 'Son of God', through whom we know God, just as he called Israel *"my firstborn son"* and said about Solomon, *"he will be a son to me."* We call him 'God' just as [God] gave his own name to Moses. Furthermore, David said of them, *"I said 'All of you are gods and children of the Most High.'"* [13] When they did not flourish,[14] however, he said of them, *"You will die like human beings, and fall like one of the princes."* [15]

5. The title of divinity is given with great honour in the world, and God places it on whomever he wishes. But the names of God are many and honoured, just as he gave his names to Moses: *"I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.*[16] *This is my name forever; this is my memorial for generations."* [17] He called himself *"I am who I am,"* [18] *"God Almighty,"* [19] and *"Lord of*

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[8] Exodus 4:22-23
[9] Hosea 11:1-2
[10] Isaiah 1:2
[11] Deuteronomy 14:1
[12] 2Samuel 7:14
[13] Psalm 82:6
[14] A omits "When they did not flourish"
[15] Psalm 82:7
[16] Exodus 3:6, 15
[17] Exodus 3:15
[18] Exodus 3:14. This name of God can also be translated "I am what I

hosts." [20] God is called by these names. Though the name of divinity is great and honoured, however, he did not withhold it from his righteous ones, and though he is the great King, he has placed the great and honoured title of kingship on human beings, who are his clay.

6. By the mouth of the prophet, God called the impious king Nebuchadnezzar 'king of kings'. Jeremiah said, *"I will decree famine and destruction and death for every people and kingdom that does not put its neck in the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, king of kings, my servant."* [21] Though he is the great King, he did not withhold the title of kingship from human beings. Though he is the great God, he did not withhold the title of divinity from the children of flesh. Though all fatherhood is his, he called people 'fathers'. He said to the assembly, *"Your children will be in the place of your fathers."* [22] Though authority is his, he gave people authority, one over another. Though worship in honour belongs to him, he allows one person to honour another in the world. Even if a person bows down to the wicked and the impious and those who deny his goodness, he is not censured by God. Concerning worship he commanded his people, *"Do not worship the sun or the moon or all hosts of heaven, and do not desire to worship any of the creatures that are on the earth."* [23] Observe the goodness and compassion of our good Creator, who did not withhold from human beings the title of divinity, the title of worship, the title of kingship, or the title of authority. He is the father of all creatures on the face of the earth. He honours and elevates and glorifies hu-

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am" or "I will be what I will be."

[19] Genesis 17:1 and elsewhere.

[20] The term is found hundreds of times, beginning in 1Samuel, and quite likely Aphrahat had no particular verse in mind. All three of the names in this sentence are simply transcribed from Hebrew: ܐܗܝܗ ܐܫܪ ܐܗܝܗ ܐܠܗܝܢ ܘܐܕܘܢܝ ܨܒܐܬ . Pierre speculates that they may have been taken from a liturgical context (1989, p. 733, note 9).

[21] Jeremiah 27:8

[22] Psalm 45:16

[23] Deuteronomy 4:19, 17

mans more than all of his creatures, however, since he formed them with his holy hands[24] and breathed into them with his Spirit, and his dwelling-place was in them from the beginning. He lives in them and walks with them, as he said in the prophet, *"I will dwell in them and walk with them."* [25] The prophet Jeremiah also said, *"You are the temple of the Lord,*[26] *if you make you ways and your actions pleasing."* [27] Long ago, David said, *"You, Lord, have been a dwelling-place for us for generations, before the mountains were conceived, before the earth laboured to bring forth, before the world was established. For ever and ever, you are God."* [28]

7. How do you make sense of [the fact] that one prophet said, *"You, Lord, have been a dwelling-place for us,"* while another said, *"I will dwell in them and walk with them"*? First, he was a dwelling-place for us, and afterwards he lived and walked in us. To the wise, both [statements] are true and clear. David said, *"You, Lord, have been a dwelling-place for us for generations, before the mountains were conceived, before the earth laboured to bring forth, before the world was established."* You know, my friend, that all the creatures, above and below, were created first, and humans [were created] after all of them. When God considered creating the world with all its ornaments, he first conceived and fashioned Adam within his mind. After Adam had been conceived in his thought, he then conceived the creatures, as it says, *"before the mountains were conceived and the earth laboured to bring forth in birth."* In conception, humans are older than and prior to the creatures, but in birth, the creatures are older than and prior to Adam. Adam was conceived and dwelt in the thought of God, and while he was contained in [God's] mind in conception, [God] created all the creatures with the word of his mouth. When he had completed and ornamented the world so that it was lacking nothing, he then fathered Adam from his thought and formed the hu-

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[24] A: "since the Holy One formed them with his hands"
[25] Leviticus 26:12
[26] A: "of God"
[27] Jeremiah 7:4-5
[28] Psalm 90:1-2

man being with his hands. Adam [first] saw the world when it was [already] established, and God gave him authority over all that he had made.[29] [This is] like a man with a son for whom he wishes to have a wedding feast, who betroths a woman to him, builds a house for him, and prepares and ornaments everything that is required by his son. Then he has a wedding feast for him and gives him authority over his house. After the conception of Adam, [God] fathered him and gave him authority over his whole creation. Concerning this, the prophet said, *"You, Lord, have been a dwelling-place for us for generations, before the mountains were conceived, before the earth laboured to bring forth, and before the world was established. From eternity to eternity, you are the Lord."* [30] In order that it will be thought by no one that there is another god, either in the past or the future, he said, *"from eternity to eternity."* As Isaiah said, *"I am the first, and I am the last."* [31] After God fathered Adam from within his thought, he formed him and breathed into him with his Spirit, and gave him a knowledge of discernment, so that he might discern good from evil, and might know that God had made him. And insofar as he knew his Creator, God was shaped and conceived within the thought of a human being. He became a temple for God, his Creator, as it is written: *"You are the temple of God."* [32] And [God] said, *"I will live in them and walk among them."*[33] As for the descendants of Adam who do not know their Creator, he is not shaped within them, does not live in them, and is not conceived in their thought. Rather, they are considered as grazing animals before him, or like the rest of the creatures.

8. Those who are stubborn will be persuaded by these things that it is not strange for us to call Christ 'Son of God'. Take note that [God] conceived and fathered all people from his thought. They are also corrected with respect to the title of divinity being

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[29] *B* omits "all that he had made"
[30] A: "you are God"
[31] Isaiah 44:6
[32] 1Corinthians 3:16
[33] Leviticus 26:11-12

upon him, since [God] placed the name 'god' on his righteous ones. [With respect to the fact] that we worship Jesus, through whom we have come to know God, they should be ashamed [of their criticism], since they prostrate themselves and bow down and honour wicked men from unclean peoples who hold power. There is no censure in this, since God gave this honour of worship to the descendants of Adam for them to honour one another, as well as those who excel and are honoured by them. Now if they, [thinking that] they are the only ones in whom there is no sin, bow down to and honour with the title of worship the wicked (those who in their wickedness deny the name of God since they do not worship their Creator), how much more should we worship and honour Jesus, who turned our stubborn intellects from all our worship of vain error and informed us that we should worship and serve and minister to the one God, our Father and Creator? They know that the kings of the world call themselves 'gods', by the name of the great God,[34] and [that they are] apostates and those who compel apostasy. Yet they bow down before them and serve and honour them, as if to graven images or idols, since the Law never accuses them and there is no sin [in what they do], just as Daniel bowed down to Nebuchadnezzar, apostate and compeller of apostasy, and was not accused. Joseph, too, bowed down to Pharoah, and it is not written that he sinned. It is established for us, however, that Jesus is God, the Son of God. Through him we know his Father, and he has restrained us from all our [other] worship. We cannot repay the one who has endured these things on our behalf, yet through worship we repay him with honour in place of his suffering on our behalf.

9. Furthermore, we must prove that in the past, this Jesus was promised in advance by the prophets and called 'Son of God'. David said, *"You are my son, and today I have given birth to you."* [35] He also said, *"I gave birth to you from the womb, child, in the splendours of holiness in ancient times."* [36] Isaiah said, *"An Infant has been born for us, and a*

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[34] A: "by the name of God the Father"
[35] Psalm 2:7
[36] Psalm 110:3

Son has been given to us. His authority will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called 'Wonderful', 'Counsellor', 'Mighty God of the ages', and 'Prince of peace. There is no end to the increase of his authority and his peace." [37] Now tell me, O wise teacher of Israel: who is [this one] who is born, and whose name is called 'Infant' and 'Son' and 'Wonderful' and 'Counsellor' and 'Mighty God of the ages' and 'Prince of peace', the increase of whose authority he said that there would be no end? If we call Christ 'Son of God', David taught us. That we should call him 'God' we have heard from Isaiah. [If it says] that his authority was given on his shoulder, [this is because] he carried his Cross and went out from Jerusalem. As for the infant that would be born, Isaiah also said, *"A virgin will conceive and give birth, and his name will be called 'Emmanuel', since our God is with us."* [38]

10. If you say that the Messiah has not yet come, I will concede this to you because of your contentiousness. But it is written that when he comes, *"The peoples will hope in him."* [39] Take note that I, from the peoples, have heard that the Messiah has come, so before his coming, I have already believed in him! Through him I worship the God of Israel. Perhaps when he comes, he will censure me because I already believed in him before he came! [You], however, are a fool. The prophets will not allow you to say that the Messiah has not yet come. Daniel rebukes you by saying, *"After sixty-two weeks the Messiah will come and be killed, and at his coming the holy city will be destroyed and will end by being overwhelmed. Until the completion of the things that have been decided, it will remain desolate."* [40] You expect and hope that at the coming of the Messiah, Israel will be gathered together by him from all places, and Jerusalem will be rebuilt and inhabited. But Daniel testifies that when the Messiah comes and is killed, Jerusalem will be destroyed and will remain in desolation until the completion of the things that have been decided forever. Concerning the suffering of Christ, David said, *"They pierced my hands and my*

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[37] Isaiah 9:6-7
[38] Isaiah 7:14
[39] Genesis 49:10
[40] Daniel 9:26-27

feet, and all my bones cried out. They looked and saw me, divided my garments among them, and cast lots for my cloak." [41] Isaiah said, *"My servant will be known and revealed and lifted up, so that many will be amazed at him. His appearance will be marred beyond that of a man, and his face beyond that of human beings."* [42] He also said, *"He will purify many nations, and kings will be amazed because of him."* [43] In that passage he said, *"He grew up like a youth before him, and like a root from dry ground."* [44] And at the end of that passage he said, *"He will be killed on account of our sins and humbled on account of our wickedness. The chastisement that brought us peace [will be] upon him, and by his scars we will be healed."* [45] By what scars were people healed? David was not killed, since he died at a good old age and was buried in Bethlehem. If they say that [this passage is] about Saul, [we point out that] Saul died in the hills of Gilboa in a war with the Philistines. If they say that they pierced his hands and his feet when they nailed his body to the wall of Beth-shan, this was not fulfilled in Saul. When the hands and feet of Saul[46] were pierced, his bones did not feel his suffering, since he was dead, and after Saul died the bodies of he and his sons were hung on the wall of Beth-shan. David said, *"They pierced my hands and my feet, and all my bones cried out,"* but after that passage he said, *"Be present to help me, God,*[47] *and save my soul from destruction."* [48] Christ was saved from destruction: he came up from Sheol and lived and rose on the third day. God was present to help him, but Saul called to the Lord and he did not answer him. He asked the prophets, but no message was given to him. He disguised himself and asked the mediums and learned [his fate]. He was defeated by the Philistines, and he killed himself with his sword when he saw that the war had overtaken him. In a [certain] passage David said, *"I will proclaim your name to my*

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[41] Psalm 22:17-18
[42] Isaiah 52:13-14
[43] Isaiah 52:15
[44] Isaiah 53:2
[45] Isaiah 53:5
[46] Literally: "the members of Saul"
[47] Syr. ܐܝܠ , transcribed from Hebrew.
[48] Psalm 22:19-20

brothers, and in the midst of the congregation I will glorify you." [49] How could these things have been fulfilled in Saul? David also said, *"You have not allowed your pure one to see corruption."* [50] All of these things, however, are fulfilled in Christ. When he came to them and they did not receive him, they wickedly judged him with false testimony. He was hung on the Cross from his hands, and they pierced his hands and feet with the nails that they had thrust into him. All of his bones cried out. On that day a great wonder occurred when the light darkened in the middle of the day, as Zechariah prophesied, *"The day is known to the Lord. [It will be] neither day-time nor night-time, and in the evening there will be light."*[51] Now what day is it that is distinguished by wonder, with neither day-time nor night-time, and with light in the evening? It is that day when they crucified him, since there was darkness at the midpoint of the day and in the evening there was light.[52] He also said, *"On that day there will be cold and frost."* [53] As you know, on the day when they crucified him it was cool, and they made a fire to warm themselves ([this was] when Simon came and stood with them).[54] And again he said, *"A spear will rise against the shepherd and against the sheep, my loved ones;*[55] *it will strike the shepherd and the lambs of the flock will be scattered. I will turn my hand against the leaders."*[56] Furthermore, David said of his suffering, *"They gave me bitter herbs for my food, and for my thirst [they gave me] vinegar to drink."* [57] He also said in that passage, *"They have persecuted the one that you have struck, and have added to the grief of the one who was slain."*[58] They added to him many things that were not written concerning him, curses and insults which even scripture was unable to

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[49] Psalm 22:23
[50] Psalm 16:10
[51] Zechariah 14:7
[52] Matthew 27:45; cf. Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44
[53] Zechariah 14:6
[54] John 18:18
[55] A: "against the man, my beloved one"
[56] Zechariah 13:7
[57] Psalm 69:21
[58] A: "your slain one". Psalm 69:21, 26

reveal since their insults were [so] hateful. Yet the Lord wished to humble him and make him suffer. He was killed on account of our wickedness and humbled on account of our sins. Sin was placed upon him.[59]

11. We worship these mercies and bow the knee before the greatness of his Father, since he has turned our worship to him. We call him 'God' like Moses, 'Firstborn' and 'Son' like Israel, 'Jesus' like Joshua son of Nun, 'Priest' like Aaron, 'King' like David, 'Great Prophet' like all the prophets, and 'Shepherd' like the shepherds who tended and guided Israel. He called us children, as he said, *"The children of strangers will listen to me."* [60] He made us his brothers, as he said, *"I will proclaim your name to my brothers."* [61] We became his friends, as he said to his disciples, *"I have called you my friends,"* [62] just as his Father called Abraham his friend.[63] And he said to us, *"I am the Good Shepherd,"* [64] the Gate,[65] the Way,[66] the Vineyard,[67] the Seed,[68] the Bridegroom,[69] the Pearl,[70] the Lamp,[71] the Light,[72] the King,[73] God,[74] the Lifegiver,[75] and Saviour.[76] He is called by many names.

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[59] Cf. 2Corinthians 5:21.
[60] Psalm 18:44
[61] Psalm 22:23
[62] John 15:15
[63] Isaiah 41:8
[64] John 10:11
[65] John 10:7
[66] John 14:6
[67] John 15:1
[68] Matthew 13:37
[69] Matthew 9:15
[70] Matthew 13:46
[71] John 5:35
[72] John 1:9; 8:12
[73] Matthew 2:2; 21:5
[74] John 1:1
[75] John 5:21
[76] Luke 2:11

12. I have written this brief argument to you, my friend, as a response to the Jews (since they say 'God has no son') and concerning our calling [Christ] 'God', 'Son of God', 'King', and 'Firstborn of all creatures.'

The demonstration on Christ, the Son of God, is completed.

DEMONSTRATION 18: *AGAINST THE JEWS, CONCERNING VIRGINITY AND HOLINESS*

I. CONTENTS

1 Jewish objections to Christian celibacy: 'You do what is not commanded by God'
2 the blessing of procreation is useless without righteousness
3 a single righteous person is more valuable to God than a multitude of wicked people
4 the splendour of God is revealed on Mt. Sinai only after the people have refrained from marital relations for three days
5 if the people could not bear to hear God's voice even after being sanctified for three days, then Moses must have been celibate to be able to speak with God on the mountain
6 further proof of the excellence of virginity: priests only permitted to marry virgins; some people should never have been born, because of their wickedness
7 celibate leaders from the O.T.: Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Ezekiel
8 marriage a gift from God, but virginity an even better gift
9 dangers of losing virginity: Adam, descendants of Seth, Samson, David, Amnon, Solomon
10 to marry is to abandon God and embrace the world
11 not to marry is to remain united in mind and spirit with God
12 virginity and holiness not required by the Law, but chosen freely; virginity an incomparable gift which cannot be found again once lost

II. TRANSLATION

1. I want to instruct you, my friend, on a topic that troubles me concerning this holy covenant and the virginity and holiness in which we stand. Because of their licentiousness and the lust of their bodies, the Jewish people take exception [to us]. They intoxicate and soften the minds of childish and ignorant people, those who are enticed and captivated by their disturbing argument.[1] They say, 'When God created Adam, he blessed him and spoke to him as follows: *"Increase and multiply; produce offspring and fill the earth."* [2] And in a similar way, he said to Noah, *"Multiply on the earth and produce offspring in it."* [3] He blessed Abraham and said to him, *"Gaze at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them."* And he said to him, *"Your seed will be like this."* [4] And in the Blessings,[5] he said to Israel, *"There will not be a barren male or female among you."* [6] He also said, *"There will be no bereaved or barren [woman] in your land."* [7] Isaac was given to Abraham as a blessing.[8] Isaac prayed for Rebecca to give birth[9] and blessed Jacob so that his seed might multiply. Hannah mournfully asked for Samuel,[10] and through her giving birth,[11] the offspring of the barren woman were numerous.[12] All the righteous received birth and a blessing. But you do what is not commanded by God, [with the result] that you have been cursed and have increased barrenness. You have prohibited procreation, the blessing of the righteous. You do not take wives, and women are not mar-

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[1] Literally: "by the argument of their disturbance"
[2] Genesis 1:28
[3] Genesis 9:7
[4] Genesis 15:5
[5] *B*: "as a blessing"
[6] Deuteronomy 7:14
[7] Exodus 23:26
[8] Genesis 17:16
[9] Genesis 25:21
[10] 1Samuel 1:10-11
[11] A: "through the promise" (ܒܡܘܠܟܢܐ instead of ܒܡܘܠܕܗ)
[12] 1Samuel 2:5

ried to men. You hate procreation, a blessing given from God.' I will explain these matters to you, my friend, as much as I am able.

2. God blessed Adam and said to him, *"Produce offspring and multiply on the earth."* He blessed them so that the world would be filled by them. From his offspring there was [indeed] fruit, but when they multiplied they became corrupt and acted wickedly, until they sickened and offended the Spirit of their Creator by their sins, and he said, *"I regret that I made them."* [13] In a torrent of wrath and swift judgement he obliterated them with the water of the deluge. Now speak to me, O debater of Israel! How did the blessing of Adam help? They corrupted their way and were obliterated by the waters of the deluge. They corrupted the state of marriage and were condemned, and the blessing was extinguished by the sins of the wicked. Noah, with a few others (not many), built an altar and satisfied the compassion of the Holy One.[14] With his few, Noah was better than the entire corrupt generation, and through him a second world was established. Furthermore, Noah was blessed, so that [his family] would multiply through procreation, so that the world would be filled and the descendants of Adam multiply.[15] But when they had multiplied and grown strong and increased through procreation, all the peoples and tongues from [Noah's] seed forgot God and worshipped graven images. They were considered to be nothing by God, like a drop from a bucket or the tipping of a scale.[16] Only the seed of the righteous lived and were delivered before God. What help was the blessing to the ten generations before the flood? What benefit [was it] to the Sodomites, [when] their lives were ended by the fire and sulphur and the blessing was extinguished by the sins of the wicked?[17] What advantage or benefit did the blessing create for the six hundred thousand [people] who went out from Egypt but perished in a desolate wilderness, having an-

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[13] Genesis 6:7
[14] Genesis 8:20
[15] Genesis 9:1, 7
[16] Isaiah 40:15
[17] Genesis 19:1-29

gered the Holy One?[18] What benefit or advantage was there in the blessing of procreation for the unclean peoples that Joshua destroyed? And what advantage to Israel has the blessing that his seed will multiply like the stars been, when war and destruction has brought them to an end?

3. To God, a single person who does [his] will is more excellent and notable before his majesty than myriads and thousands of those who are wicked. Noah was more excellent and notable before God than the ten corrupt generations before him. Abraham was esteemed before God more than the ten generations which preceded him, and he also excelled those who came after him. Isaac and Jacob, children of the promise, were better and more excellent to God than all the Amorites among whom they lived. Joseph was esteemed before God more than all the wicked people in the household of Pharoah. And Moses, the great prophet in Israel, was better and more excellent before God than the six hundred thousand [people] that he brought out from Egypt, who annoyed God by their rebellion and were not able to enter the promised land.

4. I will [now] persuade you that [even] among that people, virginity and holiness were cherished the most before God. In that former people, [these things were] greater than an abundance of procreation, which did not bring success. From the time that his Lord spoke with him, the man Moses, great prophet and leader of all Israel, cherished holiness and served the Holy One. He avoided the world and its procreation and remained by himself, in order to please his Lord. But prove to me what you are saying, [you] wise debater of the people: that from the time that God spoke with him, Moses continued to perform the duties of marriage. If you present a deceptive argument to us, I will not submit to your [empty] noise, since you seek to defile the Holy One with your licentiousness. For if [Moses] was performing the duties of marriage, he would not have been able to perform the duties of the majesty of his Lord. Similarly, Israel was not able to receive the holy speech and the

[18] Numbers 14:29-35

living words that the Holy One spoke with Moses on the mountain until he sanctified the people for three days, and then the Holy One spoke with him. For he said to Moses, *"Go down to the people and sanctify them for three days."* [19] Moses spoke plainly to them in the following way: *"You must not approach [any] woman."* [20] Then, on the third day, when they had been sanctified for three days, the Holy One revealed himself in a fierce storm, a great glory, a powerful voice, rolling thunder, a mighty trumpet, continuous brightness, and brilliant flashes of lightning. The mountains shook and the heights were in motion. The sun and the moon altered their courses. Moses ascended Mount Sinai, entered the cloud, and received the commandment.[21] Moses saw the glorious splendour; he was terrified and began to shake. Trembling seized him because he had seen the Shekinah of the Most High, which rests on the mountain, the great power of the throne of God. When they minister to him, the myriads and thousands hide their faces from his glorious splendour. They hasten and fly with their swift wings; they cry out and sanctify and exalt his majesty. Watchful, prepared, swift in their courses, lovely, beautiful, desirable, and attractive, they hasten and sanctify and fulfil his commandment, ascending and descending in the air, like swift flashes of lightning.

5. Moses spoke and God answered him in a voice. Israel stood trembling, fearful, and quaking that day; they fell on their faces and were unable to endure it. They said to Moses, *"God must not speak with us, or else we will die!"* [22] O stubborn one, [you] who are troubled by these things and stumble [over them]! If the Israelites, with whom God spoke for only one hour, were unable to listen to the voice of God until they were sanctified for three days (even though they did not go up the mountain or enter the fierce cloud), how could the man Moses, prophet and bright eye of the whole people (who stood the whole time before God and spoke with him from

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[19] Exodus 19:10
[20] Exodus 19:15
[21] The Syriac word is singular.
[22] Exodus 20:19

face to face[23]), have had conjugal relations? And if God spoke with the Israelites, who were sanctified for only three days, how much more excellent and attractive are those sanctify and keep watch and prepare [themselves] and stand before God all their days? Should God not love them even more, and his Spirit dwell in them? As it says, *"I will live in them and walk with them."* [24] And Isaiah said, *"Whom will I regard and [in whom] will I dwell, if not with the meek and humble [person] who trembles at my word?"* [25]

6. I will prove to you that virginity is excellent and cherished before God. The Holy One commanded that none of the priests (the descendants of Aaron who minister before him) was to take a wife who was a widow, or divorced, or defiled through prostitution, but was to marry a virgin from his people who had not been made unclean by another man. Notice that a widow was more unclean than a virgin. If marriage is better than virginity and holiness, why was it necessary for him to admonish the Israelites and sanctify them those three days, and then speak with them? And why was it required that a priest marry a virgin, and not approach a widow or divorcee?[26] And why did Moses restrain himself and separate from his wife for forty years, so as not to father other children besides Gershon and Eleazar? I also bring this to mind: it would have been better if Zimri had not been born, since because of his lust twenty-four thousand people fell from Israel in one day. And [it would have been better] if Achan, who made the camp of Israel cursed, had not been formed in the belly of his mother. If only Eli remained in holiness and did not father Hopni and Phineas, who abused the priesthood and governed it greedily! And why did Samuel need sons who did not keep the Law or walk in his ways? There are many similar [cases], in which it would have been

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[23] Literally: "from mouth to mouth"; Exodus 33:11

[24] Leviticus 26:12

[25] Isaiah 66:2

[26] Leviticus 21:13-14. This law applies only to the High Priest, but Aphrahat assumes that it applied to all priests.

better for [certain people] not to have fathered [children] or to have been born.

7. Moses cherished holiness, and he was cherished by the Holy One, who showed him his glory. Joshua son of Nun loved virginity and lived in the tabernacle, the place where the Holy One was served. Elijah excelled in virginity and lived in the desert, on mountains, and in caves. The Holy One brought him to the place of the holy ones, a place where those who cherish licentiousness have no authority. Elisha remained alone and celibate. He performed amazing acts of power by the hand of God. Jeremiah said, *"I do not desire the [birth] day of a person."* [27] Furthermore, his Lord commanded and said to him, *"You must not take a wife or have sons or daughters."* [28] The Jews respond to this [as follows]: 'It was for this reason that he commanded Jeremiah not to take a wife or to have sons or daughters in that place: the Lord spoke that way about sons and daughters who might be born in that place because they would die harrassed by famine. This is why he said to him, *"You must not take a wife."* ' O person devoid of intelligence, who remains in this way of thinking! The One who made Jeremiah find favour in the eyes of the king of Babylon also would have saved [his] children (if he had fathered them) from the sword and famine. Furthermore, the Lord of Ezekiel did [something] good for him when he took the desire of his eyes from him in a sudden plague and lifted up and threw away from him the harmful yoke. Prove to me, O teacher, that Joshua son of Nun took a wife and fathered children! Persuade me also that Elijah or Elisha, his disciple, possessed a house in this world! Take note that they lived in the desert and on mountains and in caves, in poverty and persecution. There was no wife with either of them, and they were served by their disciples. Observe that when Gehazi, the disciple of Elisha, turned his thoughts toward this world and desired property and a wife and children, Elisha said to him, *"Is this the time when you will acquire property and vineyards and olive trees? Because you have done this, the leprosy of Naaman will*

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[27] Jeremiah 17:16
[28] Jeremiah 16:2

clothe Gehazi and all his family forever!" [29] If you persuade me from the scriptures in each one of these [cases], I will accept [what] you [have to say]. But I will not listen to whatever your mind has concocted and spoken, since you wish to defile the Holy One with your deceptive argument.

8. Far be it from us to find any fault with marriage, which God has given to the world! For it is written: *"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."*[30] But some things are more excellent than others. God created heaven and earth, and they are very good, but heaven is more excellent than earth. He created darkness and light, but light is much better and more excellent than darkness. He created night and day, but day is much better and more excellent than night. He created the sun and the moon, but the sun is much better and more excellent than the moon. He created the stars in heaven, but one star is much better and more excellent than another in its brightness. He created Adam and Eve, but Adam is much better and more excellent than Eve. And he created marriage, the procreation of the world, and it is very good, but virginity is more excellent still.

9. The earth was not unclean when it was virginal, but after rain fell on it, it produced thistles. In his virginity, Adam was cherished and good, but after he fathered Eve, he went astray and transgressed the commandment. In their virginity, the descendants of Seth were virtuous, but when they mingled with the daughters of Cain, they were obliterated in the waters of the deluge. In his nazirite status and virginity, Samson was pleasing [to God], but he destroyed his nazirite status through his lust. David was attractive in his youth, but through his desire for Bathsheba he transgressed the Law and abrogated three of the ten commandments: *"Do not covet; do not kill; do not commit adultery."* [31] Amnon was pleasing [to God] in his virginity, but Absalom killed him because of the licentiousness

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[29] 2Kings 5:26-27
[30] Genesis 1:31
[31] Exodus 20:17, 13, 14

of his desire for his sister.[32] Solomon was virtuous and fair in his virginity, but because of his desire for women in his old age, his heart turned away from his God.[33]

10. We have heard from the Law: *"A man must leave his father and his mother and be united with his wife, and they will become one flesh."* [34] This prophecy is truly great and excellent! Who abandons his father and mother when he takes a wife? This is the meaning: when a man has not yet taken a wife, he loves and honours God, his Father, and the Holy Spirit, his Mother, and for him there is no other love. But when a man takes a wife, he forsakes his father and his mother (those which were just mentioned), and his mind is captivated by this world. His mind and his heart and his reasoning are dragged away from God into the midst of the world, and he loves and delights in it as a man loves the wife of his youth. His love for her is different than [his love] for his father and his mother.

11. And it says, *"The two of them will become one flesh."* For it is true that just as a man and a woman become one flesh and one mind, and [a man's] thoughts and reasoning become separate from his father and mother, so too a man who has not yet taken a wife and who remains alone is in one spirit and one mind with his father.

12. I have written to you, my friend, about virginity and holiness, because I heard a Jewish man who reproached one of our brothers, a member of our Church. He said to him, 'You are unclean[35] because you do not take wives, but we are holy and excellent[36] because we father [children] and multiply our seed upon the earth.' It is for this reason that I have written this argument for you. But I have also written to you above about virginity and holiness. I explained to you in the demonstration on covenanters how attractive

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[32] 2Samuel 3:1-29
[33] 1Kings 11:4
[34] Genesis 2:24
[35] *B* omits "You are unclean"
[36] A omits "excellent"

and desirable virginity is, even if a person achieves it with difficulty. As our Lord said, *"Not every person is able [to achieve] it, but [only] the one to whom it is given."* [37] And the apostle said, *"Because of the necessity that exists in the world, it is good for a person to remain as he is."* [38] For this way of life there is a great reward, since we perfect it by free choice, and not from the slavery and coercion of a commandment or because we are constrained by it under the Law. We have found its form and image in scripture, and we have seen that this image of the watchers in heaven is found with the victorious, while on earth it is acquired as a gift. If a person loses this possession, he will be unable [to find it again], nor is a person able to aquire it at [any] price. No one who has it and loses it will find it [again]. No one who does not have it can run and attain it. Love this gift, my friend, to which nothing in the whole world is comparable. With what I have written you, make your reply against the Jews, who, because of their licentiousness, do not understand the power of virginity and holiness.

The demonstration on virginity and holiness is completed.

[37] Matthew 19:11
[38] 1Corinthians 7:26

DEMONSTRATION 19: *AGAINST THE JEWS, WHO SAY THAT THEY WILL YET BE GATHERED TOGETHER*

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2 no law for God: he has taken back his promise to gather Jews
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5 further proof that Jews have refused to listen to God
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11 calculating the years: the meaning of the seven, sixty-two, and one and a half weeks; Zechariah's prophecy of the lampstand; Jerusalem in ruins until the decrees completed
12 note to the reader: Aphrahat writes to provide a response to Jews, who stubbornly refuse to be persuaded that God has mercy on all
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II. TRANSLATION

1. The voice of the Holy One was heard by Moses, and he sent him to bring his people out from Egypt: out from the house of

Pharoah and from the slavery of the Egyptians. He said, *"Say to Pharoah: 'Israel is my son, my firstborn. I say to you, 'Send [me] my son, so that he might serve me.'"* [1] When he brought them out from Egypt with signs and wonders, with his strong hand, with his uplifted arm, and with great visions, he took them across the wilderness and led them there for forty years. He brought them to the promised land, took them across the Jordan, and gave [the land] to them as an inheritance when he destroyed its inhabitants before them. They lived in it for four hundred and forty years before Solomon built the holy place, and [then] four hundred years [more until] the king of Babylon gained power over them. Because of their sins, which were many, he uprooted and scattered them to every nation, since they did not listen to his prophets that he had sent to them. When they had been in Babylon for seventy years, he remembered them [and] the covenant of their fathers once more. Through his prophets, he proclaimed concerning them that they would go up from Babylon in seventy years. When the seventy years had passed, as Jeremiah had prophesied, Daniel prayed and lifted up a petition that [God] might cause the captives to return and have mercy on them. The Lord roused the spirit of Cyrus and he sent out a proclamation throughout his whole kingdom. He proclaimed to them, *"Whoever is left from among the whole people of the Lord may turn back and go to Jerusalem in Judea, [if] his God is with him."* [2] But because they had mixed with the peoples, and had built and planted and acquired property in the place of the their captivity, not all of them wanted to go up [to Jerusalem]; some of them went up and some of them stayed. Since he knew their evil inclination, God did not compel them to go up from Babylon; Cyrus, the king of Persia, proclaimed to them without compulsion. For when he brought them up from Egypt through Moses, if the Pharoah's subjugation over them had not intensified, they would not have wanted to go up from Egypt. As they said to Moses when they found fault with him in the wilderness, *"This is the message that we gave you in Egypt: 'Let us serve the*

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[1] Exodus 4:22-23

[2] Ezra 1:1, 3

Egyptians!' It was good for us in Egypt." [3] Observe that even when they were oppressed with slavery they did not want to go up from Egypt, until the Egyptians compelled them to leave their land when they saw that their firstborn sons had died and said, *"We will all die!"* [4] It is written: *"The Egyptians compelled them to leave their land."* [5] Likewise, all of them would have gone up from Babylon if oppressors had gathered against them.

2. I have written this to you because [the Jews] of today trust in an empty hope and say, 'Israel will yet be gathered together, since the prophet spoke as follows: *"I will leave none of them among the peoples."* [6] But if our whole people is [supposed to] have been gathered together, why are we today scattered among every people?' Concerning these matters, I will persuade you, my friend, much as I am able, that Israel will never again be gathered together. They rely on this: all of the prophets gave hope to Israel. Hear, O debater of Israel! No law is placed upon God, nor is there anyone above him who could censure him for what he does. He said, *"If I speak in order to build up and plant a people or a kingdom, and afterwards they do what is evil before me, I will falsify my word and turn from the good that I promised for them. I will destroy them in their wickedness and in their sins. And if I speak in order to uproot and pull down and defeat and destroy a people or a kingdom,*[7] *and they do what is good before me, I will turn from the evil that I promised for them."* [8] Furthermore, Isaiah said, *"Woe to the one who plunders! You will not plunder, and the deceiver will not deceive you, but when you wish to plunder you will be plundered, and when you wish to deceive you will be de-*

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[3] Exodus 14:12

[4] Exodus 12:33

[5] Exodus 12:33

[6] Ezekiel 39:28

[7] *B* has "And if I speak in order to build up and plant a people or a kingdom, and afterwards to uproot and pull down…" The scribe who copied *B* must have glanced back at his original in the wrong place, and then skipped forward again.

[8] Jeremiah 18: 9-10; 7-8

ceived." [9] With respect to these things, there is no one who censures the will of God.

3. I will [now] write and show you that God never accepted their repentance, neither [through] Moses nor [through] all the prophets. Moses said to them, *"You were rebellious before the Lord from the day that I [first] knew you."* [10] He also said, *"[This] is a people whose mind is lost, in whom there is no understanding."* [11] Moreover, he said, *"They have angered me with their graven images and made me jealous with their idols. I too will make them jealous with a people that is not a people, and with a foolish people I will anger them."* [12] Moses also said to them, *"I know that after I die, you will certainly corrupt and turn aside from the way that I have commanded you, and many evil things will happen to you at the end of days. You rebel against the Lord even while I still live among you!"* [13] Hosea said, *"I have cut off my prophets and have killed [Ephraim and Judah] by the word of my mouth."* [14] *"You children of Israel! From the days of your fathers you have not turned away from your wickedness!"* [15] He also said to them, *"Your goodness is like a morning cloud, and like the dew which is the first to pass away."* [16] He also said, *"Woe to those who loathe me; I will bring evil upon them"* [17] Furthermore, he said, *"Go to Baal-peor* [18] *and consecrate yourselves to a shameful thing."* [19] He also said, *"Their honour has flown from them like a bird. Even if they raise children, I will lay lay waste to them among people, and make the desire of their bowels die."* [20] And Jeremiah said,

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[9] Isaiah 33:1

[10] Deuteronomy 9:24

[11] Deuteronomy 32:28

[12] Deuteronomy 32:21

[13] Deuteronomy 31:29

[14] Hosea 6:5

[15] Malachi 3:7. It would appear that Aphrahat considered this verse to be part of Hosea, probably through faulty memory.

[16] Hosea 6:4

[17] Hosea 7:13

[18] *B*: "Baalzebub"

[19] Hosea 9:10

[20] Hosea 9:11-12

"They are called 'rejected silver', since the Lord has rejected them." [21] And Hosea said, *"I will make them leave my house, and I will not have mercy on them again."* [22] Now that he said, *"I will not have mercy on them again"*, what is [left] for them to say? He also said, *"The Lord has rejected them because they did not listen to him."* [23] And again, he said, *"They will wander among the peoples."* [24] He also said concerning them, *"As the goodness of their land [increased], they have multiplied altars and built high places."* [25] He also said, *"Ephraim will receive shame, and Israel will be confused in his mind."* [26] He also said, *"Ephraim has surrounded me with falsehood, and Judah and the house of Israel with deceit."* [27] Again, he said, *"I have destroyed you, Israel. Who will help you?"* [28] He also said, *"I have given you a king in my anger, and have taken him away in my wrath."* [29] Micah said, *"Do not lift up your face, and do not walk with an upright posture."* [30] He also said, *"Rise and go, since this in not my rest."* [31] Again, he said, *"Those who see visions will be confused; the diviners will be confused and all of them will cover their lips, because God will not answer them."* [32]

4. Why did he say of the diviners and those who see visions that they would be confused and cover their lips? This is a disease for which there is no remedy, for it is written in the Law: *"While the leper is in Israel, his lips must be covered, his clothing ripped, and his head uncovered. His home must be outside the camp, and must call himself 'unclean' all the days that the leprosy is in him."* [33] For this reason, the prophet who proclaims with lips of falsehood will receive the disease of

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[21] Jeremiah 6:30
[22] Hosea 9:15
[23] Hosea 9:17
[24] Hosea 9:17
[25] Hosea 10:1
[26] Hosea 10:6
[27] Hosea 11:12
[28] Hosea 13:9
[29] Hosea 13:11
[30] Micah 2:3
[31] Micah 2:10
[32] Micah 3:7
[33] Leviticus 13: 45-46

leprosy, cover their lips all [their] days, and sit in confusion like Uzziah, king of the house of Judah. Because he wanted to violate the priesthood, leprosy came out from before the Shekinah of the Holy One and struck him between the eyes. He live in a house in secret, confused all of [his] days,[34] and there was a great disturbance among the people. As Zechariah said, *"You will be uprooted, just as you were uprooted in the disturbance that occurred in the days of Uzziah, king of the house of Judah."* [35]

5. Observe that, in their days, they did not accept correction. [God] said, *"I struck you with a hot wind and with hail, and the locust has consumed the multitude of your orchards, but you did not return to me, says the Lord."* [36] He also said, *"I have ruined you, just as God ruined Sodom and Gomorrah."* [37] He made it known that there is no longer any hope for them: *"The virgin of Israel has fallen and will not rise again."* [38] And he said, *"She is abandoned on the ground and there is no one who will raise her up."* [39] He also said, *"In all their markets are lamentations, and in all their streets they say 'Woe! Woe!'"* [40] He rejected and sent them away from him. He said, *"I hate and have rejected your festivals, and I will not smell [the sacrifices at] your [religious] assemblies."* [41] And again he said, *"I am not pleased with your offerings, nor will I look upon the beauty of your fattened animals."* [42] He also said to them, *"Did you bring me sacrifices or offerings for the forty years in the wilderness, children of Israel?"* [43] Concerning [the fact] that [God] has abandoned them, Jeremiah said, *"I have abandoned my house! I have abandoned my inheritance!"* [44] He also said, *"I*

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[34] 2Chronicles 26:16-21; cf. 2Kings 15:5
[35] Zechariah 14:5
[36] Amos 4:9
[37] Amos 4:11
[38] Amos 5:2
[39] Amos 5:2
[40] Amos 5:16
[41] Amos 5:21
[42] Amos 5:22
[43] Amos 5:25
[44] Jeremiah 12:7

have given the daughter of my people a letter of divorce." [45] Because they boast 'we are the people of God!', the prophet called to them: *"You are like the Kushites to me, children of Israel. Take note that I brought the children of Israel up from the land of Egypt, the Philistines from Cappadocia, and Aram*[46] *from Kir. The eyes of the Lord of lords are on the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth."* [47] Know [then] that he considered them [to be] like the Philistines. Jeremiah said concerning the assembly of Israel, *"I planted you [as] a shoot [coming] entirely from a true seed, but you changed and rebelled against me like a strange vine."* [48] And Moses said, *"Their vine is from the vine of Sodom and from the stock of Gomorrah. Their grapes are bitter grapes, and their clusters are bitter for them."* [49] David said, *"You have brought a vine out from Egypt; you have looked upon it and planted its root,"* [50] and, *"You have destroyed peoples and planted it."* [51] But when they sinned he said to them, *"The pig of the forest has eaten it, and the wild animals have fed on it."* [52] Ezekiel said concerning the vine, *"Fire has consumed its two branches, and its centre has wasted away."* [53] He said, *"When the vine was without blemish, it was of no use. Now that the fire has consumed it and it has wasted away, how will it be of any use?"* [54] Concerning the whole vineyard, Isaiah prophesied, *"My beloved has a vineyard on a fertile hill. He cultivated it, built a wall around it, and planted it with vine-shoots. But when the vineyard yielded wild grapes, he broke down its wall, tore down its tower, left it uncultivated, and kept his clouds from sending down rain upon it."* [55] Concerning the false prophets he said, *"Woe to those who build Zion with blood, and Jerusalem in wickedness."* [56] He also said of them, *"From the prophets of*

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[45] Jeremiah 3:8
[46] A: "Edom"
[47] Amos 9:7-8
[48] Jeremiah 2:21
[49] Deuteronomy 32:32
[50] Psalm 80:8
[51] Psalm 80:9
[52] Psalm 80:13
[53] Ezekiel 15:4
[54] Ezekiel 15:5
[55] Isaiah 5:1-6
[56] Habakkuk 2:12; Micah 3:10

Jerusalem godlessness has gone out into all the earth." [57] Concerning the calling of the peoples Isaiah said, *"In the last days, the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the prince of the mountains, higher than the heights, and the peoples will be gathered to it. Many peoples will go [to it] and say, 'Come, let us ascend the mountain of the Lord, and [go up] to the house of the God of Jacob! He will teach us his ways, and we will walk on his paths. The Law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."* [58] When the Law went forth from Zion, where did it go?[59] He said, *"He will judge between the peoples, and will rebuke many distant peoples."* [60] Isaiah said of them, *"Separate from them, and call them 'unclean,' for the Lord has rejected them."* [61] Furthermore, the prophet said, *"They have rejected their good things like a moth-eaten rag."* [62] He also said, *"They will be angry because of their paths, and will tremble and be afraid because of the Lord our God."* [63] He also said, *"I will burn your assemblies in smoke, and the sword will consume your young lions."* [64] And again he said, *"Woe to the city of blood, which is completely full of treachery; there will be no end to its ruin."* [65] And Micah said, *"Judah has lied, and godless acts are done in Israel and in Jerusalem, for Judah has defiled the holiness of the Lord."* [66] He said, *"You have turned aside from the way, caused many to stumble against the Law, and brought an end to the covenant of Levi. I have made you despised and humiliated among every people, because you did not keep my ways."* [67] Concerning the peoples, he said, *"I will restore pure lips to them."* [68] But concerning [the Jews] Malachi said, *"You have wearied the Lord*

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[57] Jeremiah 23:15

[58] Isaiah 2:2-3

[59] As Pierre (1989, p. 774, n. 19) points out, Aphrahat is thinking of the Law 'leaving' Zion permanently.

[60] Isaiah 2:4

[61] Jeremiah 6:30; cf. Isaiah 52:11; Lamentations 4:15

[62] Micah 7:4

[63] Micah 7:19

[64] Nahum 2:13

[65] Nahum 3:1

[66] Malachi 2:11. A mis-attribution on Aphrahat's part, but not surprising given the similar themes in the two books.

[67] Malachi 2:8-9

[68] Zephaniah 3:9

with your words." [69] He also said, *"You children of Jacob! You have not departed from your wickedness, and from the days of your father you have not kept my commandments."* [70]

6. Now listen, my friend! God saved Israel only[71] two times, first from Egypt and then from Babylon. [They were saved] from Egypt through Moses, and from Babylon through Ezra, by the prophecy of Haggai and Zechariah. Haggai said, *"Build this house, and I will take pleasure in it and be glorified in it, says the Lord."* [72] He also said, *"Act, for I am with you, and my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear, for the Lord Almighty says: 'I am shaking heaven and earth and the sea and the dry land one more time. I will shake all the peoples, and they will bring the desire of all the peoples. I will fill this house with glory, and the latter glory of this house will be greater than the former."* [73] All these things were spoken in the days of Zerubbabel, Haggai, and Zechariah, who were urging on the building of the house. Zechariah said, *"I have turned to Jerusalem in compassion, and I have placed my house in her midst."* [74] He also said, *"Cities will be emptied of goods, and the Lord will build Zion and choose Jerusalem again."* [75] He also said, *"I have become jealous over Zion, and over Jerusalem with a great jealousy. I am angry with a great anger over the peoples in commotion."* [76] Furthermore, he said, *"Jerusalem will live [in] fields, because of the multitude of people and grazing animals within her. I will be among her like a wall of copper, and I will be the glory within her."* [77] He also said, *"Up! Up! Flee from the land of the north, says the Lord, for I have scattered you to the four winds of heaven! Save yourself, O Zion, [you who] dwell with the daughter of Babylon!"* [78] He also said, *"The Lord will inherit Judah, his portion on the land of his holiness, and he will take pleasure once more in Jeru-*

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[69] Malachi 2:17
[70] Malachi 3:6-7
[71] A omits "only"
[72] Haggai 1:8
[73] Haggai 2:5-8, 10
[74] Zechariah 1:17
[75] Zechariah 1:17
[76] Zechariah 1:14-15
[77] Zechariah 2:4-5
[78] Zechariah 2:6-7

salem." [79] And again he said, *"The hands of Zerubbabel laid the foundations of this house, and his hands will complete it."* [80] Zechariah prophesied all these things, and with the gathering together of Israel from Babylon, they were fulfilled and completed. It is not as they say: 'Israel will yet be gathered together.'

7. Listen, my friend, and I will prove that Israel was saved two times, first from Egypt and then from Babylon. Isaiah said, *"The Lord will extend his hand a second time to recover the remnant of his people who are left in the land[s] of Assyria, Egypt, Tyre, Sidon, and Hamath, and from the distant islands."* [81] If they have yet to be gathered together and saved, why did Isaiah say, *"The Lord will extend his hand a second time to recover the remnant of his people who are left"*? If there was still salvation for them, Isaiah should have said, 'The Lord will extend his hand a third time to recover the remnant of his people', and not 'a second time.'

8. Furthermore, listen and I will explain to you the prayer that Daniel prayed before his God when he petitioned and made supplication for his people, so that they might come back and return from Babylon. Daniel was a favoured man to whom hidden things were revealed and who made known the end. He was a prophet, building on[82] the words of the prophets. When his people were taken as captives to Babylon, false prophets stood among them and prophesied dishonestly and falsely: *"The Lord says: 'After two years, I will break [off] from the neck of all the peoples the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon."* [83] When Jeremiah heard the prophecy of the false prophets, he wrote a letter and sent it to Babylon: *"Do not listen to the false prophets among you, who reassure you by saying, 'After two years you will return from Babylon'. The Lord says, 'Build houses and settle; plant gardens and eat their fruits. Take wives for you sons and give your daughters [in*

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[79] Zechariah 2:12
[80] Zechariah 4:9
[81] Isaiah 11:11
[82] *B*: "making petition because of" (ܥܠ ܕ instead of ܥܠ)
[83] Jeremiah 28:11

marriage] to men. [It is only] after seventy years have passed for Babylon that you will return from there." [84] Daniel, who was clothed with the Spirit, knew that the prophecy of Jeremiah was true. When the seventy years were completed, he prayed and petitioned and made supplication before his God. *"In the first year of Darius, son of Ahasuerus, from the seed of the Medes, who ruled over the kingdom of the Chaldeans: in the first year of his rule, I, Daniel, noticed the numbering of the years in the book, and saw the word of the Lord that the prophet Jeremiah spoke. When the seventy years of the devastation of Jerusalem were completed, I raised my face before the Lord God to petition with prayer and supplication and fasting and sackcloth and ashes. I prayed before the Lord my God, confessing and speaking [my] petition: 'Lord God, great and awesome, [who] keeps the covenant and the blessing for those who love him, for those who keep his commandments! We have sinned and done what is wrong and wicked, and have rebelled and turned away from your commandments and your precepts. We did not listen to your servants, the prophets, who spoke in your name about our kings, our prophets, our fathers, and all the people of the land. You are innocent, but today we are ashamed: the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all of Israel,*[85] *near and distant, in all the lands to which you dispersed them in their wickedness, who have risen against you, the Lord. Our kings and our princes and our fathers are openly shamed because they sinned against you. The Lord God [offers] mercy and the forgiveness of sins, for we rebelled against him and did not listen to the voice of the Lord our God [and did not] walk in his Law, which he set before us through his servants, the prophets. All of Israel has transgressed your Law, turned aside, and not listened to your voice. You brought upon them the curses and plagues that are written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God. Because we sinned before him, he confirmed his words that he spoke against us and against our judges who judged: to bring against us a great evil, so that nothing has been done under heaven like what has been done in Jerusalem. As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this evil has come upon us.*[86] *We did not pray before the Lord our God, in order to repent of our sins and acknowledge your faithfulness. The Lord stirred up evil and brought it upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works that*

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[84] Jeremiah 29:8, 5, 6, 10

[85] *B* omits "and all of Israel"

[86] Daniel is quoting from Deuteronomy 28:15; 31:17, 29

he does, but we did not listen to his voice. Now Lord, our God, who brought your people out from the land of Egypt with an mighty hand and an uplifted arm and made a name for yourself, as it is today: we have sinned and acted wickedly, Lord. According to all your righteousness, with which you have acted toward us, remove your wrath and anger from your city, Jerusalem, and from your holy mountain. In their sins and in the wickedness of their fathers your people were scattered to every place, and Jerusalem became a disgrace to all the peoples. Now, God, hear the prayer of your servant and [hear] our supplication, and make your face shine on your holy place, which has been destroyed. For the sake of you name, Lord, incline your ear, my God, and listen. Open your eyes, and see our ruins and desolate places, and the city that is called by your name. We do not rely on our righteousness as we pray before you, but on your many mercies. Lord, hear us! Lord, have mercy on us! Lord, have regard for us! Act and do not delay, for the sake of your name, my God, for your city and your people are called by your name." [87]

9. When Daniel had finished his prayer, he said, *"While I was praying and confessing my offences and the offences of my people Israel, and while I was lifting up my supplication before the Lord my God concerning the holy mountain of my God and speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel (whom I had seen before) flew swiftly, circled in the air, came [down] from the sky, and approached me at the time of the evening offering. He came and said to me, 'I have come forth now to teach you, so that you will comprehend. At the beginning of your prayer, the word went forth, and I have come to show you [its meaning], because you are favoured. Consider the word, and comprehend the vision. Seventy weeks will pass for your people and for your holy city, for the completion of offences, for the destruction of sins, for the forgiveness of wickedness, to bring an eternal righteousness, to fulfill the vision and the prophets, and for the Messiah, the Holy of Holies.*[88] *Know and comprehend: from the going forth of the word to return and rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of the King-Messiah are seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. At the appointed time, he will rebuild Jerusalem, its markets and broad places. After sixty-two weeks, the Messiah will be killed and [Jerusalem] will have nothing. The holy city will be destroyed with the King who is coming, until the end when it will be over-*

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[87] Daniel 9:1-19

[88] Syr. ܘܠܡܫܝܚܐ ܩܕܫ ܩܕܫܝܢ

whelmed, and until the end of the war of the decrees of desolation.[89] *He will strengthen the testament*[90] *for many, for one week and half a week, and he will abolish sacrifice and offerings. [There will be] desolation on wings of uncleanness."* [91]

10. Examine and understand, my friend, the prayer that Daniel prayed and the vision that was made plain to him. When seventy years had passed for the desolation of Jerusalem, he prayed and confessed in the first year of Darius. When he confessed his offences and the offences of his people Israel, Gabriel, the receiver of prayers, came to him and said, *"At the beginning of your prayer, the word went forth."* This is the word that was at the beginning of his prayer: that the captives would return from Babylon. And Daniel considered what would happen to the people after their return. Then Gabriel said to him, *"Because you are favoured, I will show you what will happen at the end of days. Now consider the word, and comprehend the vision. Seventy weeks will pass for your people and for your holy city, for the completion of offences, for the destruction of sins, for the forgiveness of wickedness, to bring an eternal righteousness, to fulfill the vision and the prophets, and for the Messiah, the Holy of Holies. Know and comprehend: from the going forth of the word to return and rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of the King-Messiah are seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. At the appointed time, he will rebuild Jerusalem, its markets and broad places. After sixty-two weeks, the Messiah will be killed and [Jerusalem] will have nothing. The holy city will be destroyed with the King who is coming, until the end when it will be overwhelmed, and until the end of the war of the decrees of desolation. He will strengthen the testament for many, for one week and half a week, and he will abolish sacrifice and offerings. [There will be] desolation on wings of uncleanness."* [92]

11. He said to him, *"Seventy weeks will pass for your people and for your holy city."* The seventy weeks are the four hundred and ninety years

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[89] Cf. the wording of this same quotation in 17.10.

[90] *B*: "testaments"; cf. 2.6 and 23.12

[91] Daniel 9:20-27. *B*: "wings of goodness" (ܛܝܒܘܬܐ instead of ܛܢܦܘܬܐ)

[92] Daniel 9:23-27

from the time that Daniel prayed until Jerusalem was destroyed with a final destruction and would not be inhabited again. He said, *"For seven weeks he will rebuild Jerusalem,"* since when the captives went up by the hand of Ezra and started to build the house in the days of Cyrus and Darius, they laid the foundations of the house. But their enemies stopped them in the days of Darius, Artaxerxes, and the other Persian kings. They did not allow them to build and finish [the house]. I will show you the significance of [this] passage. It is written in Zechariah the prophet: *"I saw a lampstand, with seven lamps on it, and each of the lamps had seven mouths."* [93] The forty-nine are the seven weeks. He also said in the prophecy, *"This is the word of the Lord concerning Zerubbabel: not by power, and not by might, but by the Spirit."* [94] And above he said, *"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundations of this house, and his hands will complete it."* [95] All the days, from the day when the foundations of the house were laid until the building of the house was completed, [amounted to] forty-nine years. These [represent] seven weeks from the seventy. This is the vision of the lampstand with the seven lamps and their forty-nine mouths, and this is the word of the Lord concerning Zerubbabel. These are the forty-nine years. After these seven weeks and the building of the house in the days of Zerubbabel, Jerusalem was inhabited for sixty-two weeks, [which was] four hundred and thirty-four years. Why did he say earlier, *"Seventy weeks will pass for your people and your holy city,"* and [then] later there were seven and sixty-two, which add up to sixty-nine? Later, he said, *"For a week and half a week he will abolish sacrifice and offerings."* This was the one week out of seventy when sacrifices were abolished. Thus it was calculated that they lived in Babylon for seventy weeks, when the land rested in its devastation for all the days of its desolation. Now be persuaded that after these weeks the Messiah came and was killed for the fulfillment of the vision and the prophets. When he blessed Judah, Jacob our father said, *"The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor a law-*

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[93] Zechariah 4:2
[94] Zechariah 4:6
[95] Zechariah 4:9

giver from among his progeny, until he to whom the kingdom belongs comes." [96] Be persuaded, my friend, and consider that the weeks have been completed, visions and prophets have been been terminated, and the kingdom has been cut off from Judah. Jerusalem has been destroyed and its people have been scattered among every people. The descendants of Israel live without sacrifices and without an altar, and until the completion of the decrees, Jerusalem will be destroyed and will remain in desolation. The vineyard has withered and produced wild grapes;[97] fire has consumed the two branches of the vine.[98] The wall of the vineyard is broken down, its tower is torn down, and its winepress is destroyed. The silver is rejected and is of no use.[99] A letter of divorce has been written for Jerusalem.[100]

12. I have written this brief argument to you so that you may be able to respond when it is necessary to give a reply and strengthen the mind of whoever is listening,[101] so that they will not submit to the provocative argument of [the Jews]. They will not accept [our] argument, since scripture has imprisoned them and they will not listen and be persuaded that God has mercy on every person. He said of them, *"This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."* [102] They say to Jeremiah, *"We will not listen to the message that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord."* [103]

13. I have written to you as much as I have understood about these visions of Daniel, my friend. You should also know that in the third year of Cyrus, after Gabriel made plain what would happen to his people, a word was revealed to Daniel, and [scripture] said,*"The word is true."* [104] In a vision, he comprehended with great

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[96] Genesis 49:10
[97] Isaiah 5:2, 6
[98] Ezekiel 15:4
[99] Jeremiah 6:30
[100] Jeremiah 3:8
[101] A: "so that the mind of whoever is listening might be at rest"
[102] Isaiah 29:13; cf. Matthew 15:8
[103] Jeremiah 44:16
[104] Daniel 10:1

power, and said, *"I was sitting in mourning for three weeks. I did not eat [any] rich meals; meat and wine did not go into my mouth."* [105] Observe that Daniel saw this vision in the third year of Cyrus, on the twenty-fourth day of the first month (which is Nisan), two years after Cyrus sent out a proclamation in his kingdom allowing the captives to return to Jerusalem. In the first year of Darius, son of Ahasuerus, he prayed before God, at the end of the seventy years [needed] to fulfill the word of Jeremiah. As the text informs [us], it was the first year of the rule of Darius the Mede, since when he killed Belshazzar, he ruled in his place. [Belshazzar] administered his kingdom for a little while, but it was Cyrus the Persian who received [the kingdom]. Why did Darius receive the kingdom first? As the matter appears to us, it was for the fulfillment of the vision that Daniel made plain to Belshazzar. He said to him, *"This is the interpretation of the word and the explanation of the writing: 'Mene', 'Tekel', and 'Parsin'. 'Mene': God has calculated your reign and brought it to an end. 'Tekel': You are in the balance, and have been found wanting. 'Parsin': Your kingdom is divided and given to Media and Persia."* [106] For this reason, Darius arose earlier in the kingdom, so that the vision might be fulfilled. Cyrus the Persian received it after him, at the completion of seventy years, at the time when Daniel prayed so that the captives might return through him. As Isaiah prophesied concerning him, *"He will build my city and send [back] my captives."* [107] Cyrus himself said, *"God has given us rule over the earth, and has commanded me to build a house for him in Jerusalem, which is in Judea."* [108] Observe that the fast of Daniel after his prayer was for this: he fasted because Jerusalem would be inhabited for seventy weeks, but after this would be destroyed and would remain desolate forever, until the fulfillment of the decrees.

The demonstration against the Jews is completed.

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[105] Daniel 10:2
[106] Daniel 5:25-28
[107] Isaiah 45:13
[108] Ezra 1:2

DEMONSTRATION 20: *ON THE SUPPORT OF THE POOR*

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II. TRANSLATION

1. This gift is great and excellent: when a person of discernment gives to the poor from the work of his hands, and not from the plundering of others, as God said through the prophet: *"This is what*

pleases me: give rest to the weary. This is the way of the one who obeys." [1] Again, this same prophet said, *"This is acceptable fasting, which God loves: when you break your bread for the hungry, and bring strangers into your house, and when you see a naked person and you clothe him, and when you do not neglect your children."* [2] Whoever does these things *"is like a garden that thrives, and like a spring of water whose water does not dry up, and his righteousness goes before him, and he is gathered into the glory of the Lord."*[3]

2. Moses, the great prophet of Israel, admonished and commanded concerning those who are poor, those who suffer misfortune, strangers, sojourners, foreigners, orphans, and widows. For he said to Israel, *"When you harvest your crop, do not complete your fields, and if you forget a sheaf, you shall not turn back to get it. Rather, it shall be for the poor, and for foreigners,*[4] *orphans, and widows. Remember that you also were in a similar state in Egypt."* [5] He also said, *"When you pick your vineyard, do not go over it a second time, and when you thrash your olive tree, do not go back and look over it again, for what remains shall be for the foreigners and the poor among you. When you do these things, the Lord your God shall bless all that you set your hands to,*[6] *and you will eat provisions which have grown old, and remove old provisions to make room for the new."* [7] Again he said to them, *"Behold, I am leading you to a good and fertile land which flows with milk and honey, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you will mine brass,*[8] *a land that the eyes of the Lord God are on from the beginning to the end of the age,*[9] *a land in which you will eat bread and not be in need."* [10] Though the land was good and fertile, poverty had not been eradicated. Thus, again he commanded them and said to

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[1] Isaiah 28:12
[2] Isaiah 58:6-7
[3] Isaiah 58:11, 8
[4] A omits "and for foreigners"
[5] Deut. 24:19-22; Lev. 19:9; 23:22
[6] Deut. 24:21, 22, 19
[7] Lev. 26:10
[8] Deut. 8:7-9
[9] Deut. 11:12
[10] Deut. 8:9

them, *"For six years you shall sow your land and gather its harvest, but in the seventh year you shall plough it and leave it, and the poor that are among you will eat from it, and what remains the beast of the field will eat."* [11] And in this way he spoke to them: *"In the seventh year you must not pluck the young shoots, or harvest the crop which grows from the previous year. Rather, these must be for the poor."* [12] It was because he knew their evil inclination that he spoke to them. And if they asked, 'How will we eat in the seventh year if we do not sow and do not gather in the harvest?', he said to them, *"I will send to you my blessings in the sixth year, and you will take in a triple harvest, for the sixth, seventh, and eighth years, and you will eat from the harvest of the sixth until the ninth year."* [13]

3. Moses diligently warned them, *"Do not keep the wages of the labourer with you overnight, but give him his wage the same day, or he will cry out to God concerning you, and [your action] will become a sin."* [14] For during that night while the wage of the labourer stays with you your soul may be taken from you, and the poor man would be deprived of his wage, which is with you, and for which sake he submitted himself to you. And if he dies, and inquires after his wage, you will not be able to provide it there.

4. David, too, concerned himself with the poor, those suffering misfortune, with orphans and widows, and he appointed governors in all of Israel, that they might provide[15] and care for the poor. And when he sang[16] and offered praise before his God, he blessed those who provide for the poor. He said, *"Blessed is the one who pays attention to the poor man, for in the day of trouble the Lord will deliver him, and the Lord will keep him and cause him to live and make him prosper in the land, and will not hand him over to his enemies. And when he is sick the Lord*

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[11] Ex. 23:10-11
[12] Lev. 25:4-6
[13] Lev. 25:20-22
[14] Deut. 24:15
[15] *B*: "judge"
[16] *B*: "led"

will uphold him on his sickbed." [17] Again he says in another psalm, *"He has distributed and given to the poor, and his righteousness stands forever."* [18] Again it is written: *"He who gives to a poor man lends to God."* [19] Again he said, *"Store up almsgiving and make a treasury [of it], for this is better for you than all treasures."* [20] Again it is written: *"Give to God from what he gives to you."* [21] Observe that the almsgiver receives from the poor person, in order to obtain through the poor that which might fill up his [own] poverty, while they [in turn] are comforted. For he may not be able to provide for all the needs of the poor man, unless he creates an income for the poor from what he owns, so that, through them, the wealth that he gives to the poor is taken away. And when the poor man receives it, he gives thanks to the Lord of them both.

5. Our Lord Jesus, when he made known the demonstration of the judgement on the last day, on which he will separate and appoint on his right and his left, and approve the kindness of those who are good, also called those who provide for the poor the blessed of the Father, who inherit his kingdom. For he said to those on his right, *"Enter, blessed of the Father, and inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the beginning. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me water, I was naked and you clothed me, I was a stranger and you took me in, I was sick and you visited me, and I was in prison and you came to me.' Then those blessed ones did not understand the sense of what he was saying, and so they inquired of our Lord and addressed him: 'When did we see you, our Lord, in this poverty and do these things for you?' And he said to them, 'Whatever you did for one of these little brothers of mine, it was done for me.' And he turned to those on his left and said to them, 'Depart from me, you accursed ones, and go to the fire which is the inheritance of the Evil One and his angels, for you did not do these things*

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[17] Psalm 41:1-3

[18] Psalm 112:9

[19] Sirach 32:12 (Peshitta); cf. Prov. 19:17

[20] Sirach 29:11-12 (Peshitta); cf. Tobit 12:8

[21] A: "from whatever is yours". Sirach 29:11-12 (Peshitta); cf. Tobit 4:7

for me.' Then those on his left also inquired and addressed him: 'When did we see you, our Lord, as one of these and not minister to you?' He said to them: 'Those who did not do [these things] for these poor ones also did not do them for me.'" [22] And the righteous who had ministered to Christ in the poor entered into eternal life, but the wicked went to the fire and the darkness because they did not take care of Christ in the poor.

6. In another example he spoke of the rich man who trusted in his possessions. *"When he gathered in a great harvest, he said to his soul, 'Behold, many goods have been gathered in for you for many years. Relax, eat, and be merry!' God said to him, 'Don't you understand?! Behold! This very night your soul is being demanded of you. And the things you have provided [for yourself], who shall they be for?'"* And afterwards [Christ] said, *"Such is the case with the one who stores up treasures for himself but is not rich toward God."* [23]

7. Again, he presented another example concerning a rich man who took pleasure in his possessions and whose end was in Sheol.[24] And there was a poor man lying at his door who was sighing and groaning, since he wanted to satisfy his hunger with what fell from that rich man's table. And he said, *"No one was giving to him."* [25] He also said, *"The dogs were coming and licking his scabs."* [26] For the rich man who took delight in his possessions is that people who ate and grew fat and kicked, and forgot the Lord and reviled God,[27] as it is written: *"The Israelites spoke words which were not good to God and to Moses."* [28] But Moses called them 'rich', saying to them, *"What nation has a god who is as close to it as the Lord God [is to you], or has righteous laws and upright judgements [as you do]?"* [29] Again he said to

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[22] Matt. 25:32-45
[23] Luke 12:16-21
[24] Luke 16:19-31
[25] From the parable of the prodigal son. See Luke 15:16.
[26] Luke 16:21
[27] See Deut. 32:15
[28] Numbers 21: 5
[29] *B*: "a righteous Law and upright judgement". Deut. 4:7-8.

them, *"Behold, you are entering the land of the Canaanites and are inheriting it. For you are going into houses that you did not build, and to vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant, and cisterns that you did not dig, and you will eat and be satisfied and enjoy life to the full, but you will forget the Lord, even though the many good things that he gave you will have increased."* [30]

8. The poor man who was lying at the door [of the rich man] is a type of our Saviour. For he longed and desired to receive fruit from them and to take it to the one who sent him. But no one gave to him. And when it said, *"Dogs were coming and licking his sores,"* the dogs who came represent the nations who continually lick the scars of our Saviour. They receive his body and fix their eyes upon it. For there are dogs whose souls are greedy, but who do not know how to satisfy [themselves] and are unable to bark.[31] (Observe that those dogs who licked the sores of the poor man were not greedy, because if they were greedy they would have longed for the rich man's table, and would not have been licking [the poor man's] sores.) Concerning them the prophet said, *"The dogs have greedy souls, and do not know how to satisfy [themselves]."* [32] And David said, *"They howl like dogs and roam around the city."* [33]

9. Another scripture says, *"That rich man died and was buried, and was lying in torment. The poor man also died, and the angels took him to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man raised his eyes from the midst of Sheol and from [his] torment, and he saw Abraham and Lazarus in his bosom, and he called out in a loud voice, 'Father Abraham, have compassion on me and send Lazarus, so that he might come and help me, and moisten my tongue for me, on account of the fires which are severely tormenting me.' Abraham said to him, 'My son, remember that you received your rewards in your lifetime but Lazarus received his punishment. Now you seek him but he will not help you, because there is a great chasm between us and you, and no one from among you is able*

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[30] See Deut. 6:10-13

[31] See Isaiah 56:10-11. Cf. dem. 7.21; 14.37

[32] *B*: "do not know how to bark". Both variants are supported by the passage from Isaiah.

[33] Psalm 59:6

to come to us, nor is anyone from us [able to go] to you.' He said to him, 'If this cannot be, then I beg you to send [him] to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him go and bear witness to them, so that they might not sin and also come to this place of torment.' But Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they will hear from them.' He said to him, 'No, father Abraham. But if someone goes to them from among the dead, then they will repent.' Abraham said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, then they will not even believe someone who comes to them from among the dead.'"[34] As I said above, that rich man [represents] the people, and the poor man [represents] our Saviour, as it is written, *"The Lord willed to humble him and afflict him."* [35] And the apostle said, *"For your sake he who is rich made himself poor, so that through his poverty you might become rich."* [36] Again, he said, *"He humbled himself and was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."* [37]

10. And he said, *"That rich man died."* Indeed, the prophet said concerning them, *"The Lord God will put you to death, but to his servants he will give another name."* [38] For his servants are the people which is from the peoples. And he gave them another name: he called them 'Christians', the followers of Christ, and not 'rulers of Sodom' or 'people of Gomorrah' or other such things. As the Gospel bears witness to us concerning the twelve apostles, *"There in Antioch they were first called 'Christian disciples'."*[39]

11. *"And that poor man died, and the angels carried him to the bosom of Abraham."* As Mary said, *"They have carried away our Lord, and I do not know where they have taken him."* [40] And those angels said to Mary, 'He has risen, and has gone to the one who sent him.'[41] And the angels

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[34] Luke 16:22-31
[35] Isaiah 53:10
[36] 2Cor. 8:9
[37] Phil. 2:8
[38] Isaiah 65:15
[39] Acts 11:26
[40] John 20:13
[41] See Matthew 28:6 and John 16:5

were ministering to him, as it is said previously in the Gospel: *"Angels went down and ministered to Jesus."* [42] Furthermore, when he was born the angels were giving glory and saying, *"Glory to God in heaven, and good hope for humankind!"* [43] And the angel Gabriel announced his birth.[44] And he said to Simon his disciple, *"Do you not believe that if I asked my Father, he would give me a legion of heavenly angels?"* [45] And again he said to his disciples, *"You will see heaven opened and the angels of God descending and ascending upon the Son of Man."* [46]

12. These things I write to you because it is written, *"When the poor man died, angels took him to the bosom of Abraham."* It said, *"took him to the bosom of Abraham."* This is the kingdom of heaven. And Abraham said to the rich man, *"A great chasm is between us and you, and no one from you can come to us, nor can anyone from us go to you."* This is because after death and resurrection there is no repentance. No wicked person repents and goes to the kingdom, and no righteous person sins again and goes to torment. This is the great chasm. And if anyone on the other side asks for help, no help will be sent to him. By this is shown that in that day, no one will help his friend. And [the rich man] said, *"Go to my father's house and preach to them, so that they will not come down [here]."* And [Abraham] said to him, *"They have Moses and the Prophets. Let them listen to them."* And he said, *"If a person from the dead goes to them they will repent."* This clearly [means] that that people did not listen to Moses and the Prophets, and did not believe in Jesus, who rose from the realm of the dead.

13. It is also written that the offences of the one who sins are wiped out through almsgiving. As Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, *"Atone for your sins through almsgiving, and your iniquity through compassion for the poor."* [47] And the prophet said to the Israelites, *"Because you*

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[42] Matthew 4:11
[43] Luke 2:14
[44] Luke 1:26
[45] Matthew 26:53
[46] John 1:51
[47] Daniel 4:27

oppress the poor man and take choice offerings from him, you will not live in the houses of cut stone that you have built, nor will you drink wine from the pleasing vineyards that you have planted." [48]

14. Take notice that God is concerned for the poor! For Isaiah said, *"The poor and the downtrodden seek water, but there is none, and their tongues are parched with thirst. I, the Lord, the God of Israel, will answer them, and will not forsake them."* And because their tongues are parched for lack of water, *"I will open up rivers on the mountains, and springs in the midst of the valleys. I will put in the desert cedars and acacia, myrtle and olive trees, and I will set in the valley groves of beautiful cypress trees."* [49] For the poor and the oppressed who seek water when there is none are the people which is from the peoples, and the water is the teaching of the holy scriptures, which dries up their tongues with praise. And when he said, *"I will open rivers on the mountains, and springs in the midst of the valleys,"* the mountains and valleys indicate people who are important and people who are lowly; rivers and springs flow from them. And he said, *"I will put in the desert cedars and acacia, myrtle and olive trees, and I will set up in the valley [groves of] cypress trees."* The desert represents the peoples who formerly were made like an arid desert. The cedars, acacia, myrtle, and olive trees are the priests of the people and the holy covenant,[50] which are beautiful with their high branches, like trees which, in summer and winter, are beautiful and thick with their leaves. *"And I will set in the valley groves of beautiful cypress trees."* From humble people comes forth discourse and instruction of the Spirit, which is their sweet fragrance, like the beautiful cypress, as the apostle said: *"In every place we are a sweet fragrance to God."* [51]

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[48] Amos 5:11

[49] Isaiah 41:17-19. A omits "and I will set... cypress trees".

[50] This line distinguishes between the priests of the Church ("people" here does not refer to Jews) and the "holy covenant" , which is a reference to the covenanters (see 18.1; 14.7).

[51] 2Corinthians 2:14-15

15. Job's friends were speaking to him when they were reproaching him in his trial: *"Why have these things happened to you? It is because you have sent the widow away empty-handed, and have crushed the arm of the orphan. You have given no water to the weary to drink, and you have withheld bread from the hungry.*[52] *You have driven away the pledge of the orphan, and have taken the widow's ox as a pledge.*[53] *There is a man who sows seed for himself in the ground, but a violent man takes it [i.e. his land] from him.*[54] *Because you have done these things, snares have surrounded you and fear disturbs you unexpectedly."* [55] And when he heard these things from them, he defended himself. He said to them, *"I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame,*[56] *and those who lacked clothing were warmed by the shearing of my sheep. And I did not raise my hand against the orphan, but I saw him at the gate and helped him.*[57] *I did not send away the widow empty-handed, and my bread I did not keep for myself alone, but the orphan ate from it.*[58] *I broke the fangs of the wicked man, and made him drop the prey from his mouth. And I said, 'I will rescue the poor.'"* [59] Again he said, *"I have opened my door to the traveller, and have not darkened the eyes of the widow.*[60] *If I have not done these things, then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder, and my arm be broken from its socket.*[61] *Have pity on me, have pity on me, you my friends, for the hand of God has touched me,*[62] *and it was not because of my sins that these things have happened to me!"*

16. Our Lord admonished in particular concerning the poor, and said to the master of the banquet, *"When you are giving a banquet or feast, do not invite your friends or brothers or rich neighbours, lest they also invite you [to their feasts], and you are repaid. Rather, when you are giving a*

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[52] Job 22:9, 7
[53] Job 24:3
[54] Perhaps from Job 22:8; 31:8
[55] Job 22:10
[56] Job 29:15
[57] Job 31:19-21
[58] Job 31:16-17
[59] Job 29:16-17
[60] Job 31:32, 16
[61] Job 31:22
[62] Job 19:21

banquet, invite the poor, the common people, the blind, the lame, and those who have nothing. You will be blessed, for they have nothing with which to repay you, and your reward will be at the resurrection with the righteous." [63] Again he said, *"Make friends for yourselves through this wealth which is evil, so that when it is gone, they will welcome you in their eternal dwellings."* [64] Who are the friends who have eternal dwellings, and who through dishonest wealth gain people for themselves? The friends are God and his Annointed One, who have eternal dwellings. When a person gives to the poor from his own possessions, he satisfies the will of God and his Annointed One, as he says, *"This is what pleases me: Give rest to the weary."* [65] And our Lord said, *"Whenever you have done these things to another, you have done them to me."* [66] And he said, *"Make friends for yourselves,"* just as Isaiah said, *"Do not fear, my servant Jacob, offspring of Abraham, my friend."* [67] And our Lord said to his disciples, *"I have called you my friends, because all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you."* [68] These are the friends that people obtain when they give to the poor. And in their eternal dwellings [there is] a place in which the righteous rest, a habitation which hands have not made, and which is not among these created things, as the apostle said. Again, our Lord encouraged [us] to take care of the poor and the oppressed, for he said, *"Do not store up treasures for yourselves on the earth, where thieves break in and steal, and where the worm attacks and corrupts. Rather, store up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, a treasure that will not decrease, [in] a place where no worm corrupts and no thieves steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* [69] Furthermore, the apostle said concerning the apostles who were before

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[63] Luke 14:12-14
[64] Luke 16:9
[65] Isaiah 28:12
[66] Matthew 25:40
[67] Isaiah 41:10, 8; 44:2
[68] John 15:15
[69] Matthew 6:19-21

him,[70] *"Only this did they command: that we remember the poor, and this is what I was anxious to do."* [71]

17. Our Lord said, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* [72] And concerning the rich he said, *"Woe to you who are rich, for you have received what you have wanted."* [73] Who are the rich who have received their wants, if not that former people who always sought the [things of] earth and not of heaven? [It is] like that rich man who gathered and multiplied his harvest yet was not rich toward God,[74] or like the man who took delight in all his possessions and received what he wanted in the present, but afterwards nothing was given to him when he asked.[75] And concerning the poor he said, *"Theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* Do we not say that he said this about whoever is poor with respect to worldly possessions? Yet there are poor people who do not have anything, but who are thieves, murderers, liars, and servants of hatred, [and who are] outside the Law. Does the kingdom of heaven belong to such as these? God forbid! But a blessing is given to the poor in spirit, those who fear God. These are people for whom possessions mean nothing compared to the fear of their God, though they make use of them superficially: wealthy Abraham, who was poor in spirit toward his God; Isaac and Jacob, the sons of his promise, who walked in his footsteps and were pleasing to God although they were rich; Job, a rich man from the east, who, when he was tested by his God through [the loss of] his children and his possessions, took delight in whatever he gave him, and did not blaspheme God. These are the people about whom the apostle spoke: *"There are those who, through kindness to strangers, have welcomed angels."* [76] Now, who are those who show kindness to strangers, if not Abraham and Lot and

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[70] See Galatians 1:17
[71] Galatians 2:10
[72] Matthew 5:3
[73] Luke 6:24
[74] Luke 12:21
[75] Luke 16:25
[76] Hebrews 13:2

Jacob, as well as the other righteous people like them? Observe, my friend, how these patriarchs showed kindness to strangers. When Abraham saw these angels he thought they were strangers.[77] He ran to meet them and bowed down before them, so that they would come to his tent and refresh themselves with him, since a stranger is blessed by the hospitality of strangers. Marvel greatly at this, that an important man prostrates himself, pays reverence, deprecates himself, and asks that the strangers might come with him to refresh themselves. For Abraham's custom was to receive strangers every day, and when he saw these angels, they appeared to him as poor strangers, and he ran out to meet them and received them as strangers, their greatness being concealed from his eyes. And he got up and went before them, and ministered to them. He instructed Sarah to prepare with her hands three measures of fine flour, clearly intending one for each man, but an overflowing measure, so that when he receives [his] rewards, they would be measured to him likewise. And because he loved strangers he received a reward and a promise: through his offspring all peoples would be blessed. Lot also welcomed strangers, and strangers saved him from wicked Sodom, as Ezekiel said: *"This was the evil of Sodom and her neighbors: they did not bring joy to the poor and the oppressed. And when I saw these things in them I ruined them."* [78] Then there is Zacchaeus, the tax collector and sinner, who, when our Lord went into his house, said to him, *"See, my Lord! Half of my possessions I am giving to the poor, and to each person I have cheated I will pay back four times as much."* And our Lord said to him, *"Today salvation has come to this house."* [79]

18. Then there is that rich man who came to our Lord and said to him, *"What must I do to inherit eternal life?"* Our Lord said to him, *"Do not commit adultery and do not steal. Honour your father and your mother, and love your neighbour as yourself."* That man [then] said to him, *"I have done these things from my youth. What am I lacking?" Then Jesus looked at*

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[77] See Genesis 18:2ff.
[78] Ezekiel 16:49-50
[79] Luke 18:8-9

him with kindness and said to him, "This is what you lack: If you wish to become perfect, go and sell all that you own and give to the poor, and take up your cross and come after me." When he heard [this], that man was greatly distressed, and he went to his house, being anxious because he was rich with many possessions. And Jesus said, "See how difficult it is for those who rely on their wealth to enter the kingdom of heaven." Again he said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man [to enter] the kingdom of God." [80] The apostle also said, *"Whoever sows this seed sparingly will also reap sparingly, but whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."* [81] Let us not grow weary of doing what is good.

19. I have written this brief reminder to you, my friend, concerning giving to the poor. I am encouraging and instructing those who give, that they might sow for themselves a seed of life, as it is written: *"Instruct the righteous man and he will increase his learning."*[82] In these reminders I have exhorted each person who loves the poor. But I also address you, so that you might share in his work.

The demonstration on the support of the poor is completed.

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[80] Matthew 19:16-24; Mark 10:17-25; Luke 18:18-25
[81] 2Corinthians 9:6
[82] Proverbs 9:9

DEMONSTRATION 21: *ON PERSECUTION*

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II. TRANSLATION

1. I heard an reproach that greatly distressed me. The unclean say, "This people that has been gathered from the peoples has no God." And the wicked say, "If they have a God, why does he not seek vengeance for his people?" The gloom thickens around me even more whenever the Jews reproach us[1] and magnify themselves over our people. It happened one day that a man who is called a 'sage of the Jews' challenged me: "Jesus, whom you call your teacher, wrote to you, *'If there is faith like a single mustard seed among you, you will say to this mountain, 'Move!', and it will move out of your way,' and 'Be lifted up!', and it will fall into the sea and obey you."* [2] Thus, among your whole people there is not one sage whose prayer is heard and who petitions God so that your persecutions might end. For it is written to you in your word: *"There is nothing that you will be unable to do."* [3] "

2. When I saw that he was blaspheming and greatly misrepresenting the Way,[4] my mind was disturbed and I knew that he would not accept the explanation of the words that he was quoting to me. I then challenged him with words from the Law and the Prophets. I said to him, "You believe that though you are scattered, God is with you." He asserted, "God is with us, since God said to Israel, *"I will not leave them in the lands of their enemies, nor have I brought an end to my covenant with them."* [5] " And I said to him, "What I hear from

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[1] *B*: "me"
[2] Matthew 17:20; 21:22
[3] Matthew 17:20
[4] Literally: "he was speaking much beyond the Way"
[5] Leviticus 26:44

you (that God is with you) is very good, but I will speak against your words. The prophet Isaiah said to Israel, as if from the mouth of his God, *"If you pass through the sea, I am with you, and rivers will not overwhelm you. If you walk on the fire, you will not be burned and the flame will not set you on fire, because the Lord your God is with you."* [6] Thus, there is not a single upright and good and wise man among your whole people who can pass through the sea and live and not be suffocated, or [through] a river without it overwhelming him. Let him walk on the fire and see if he is not burned, or if the flame does not set him on fire! If you bring me an interpretation, I will not be persuaded by you, just as you will not accept from me the explanation of the words with which you challenged me."

3. I also asked him [about] another word written in Ezekiel, in which he said to Jerusalem, *"Sodom and her daughters will be built up* [7] *as in ancient times, and you and your daughters will become [as you were] in ancient times."* [8] [I said,] "Clarify this matter for me." He began to respond to me by saying,[9] "This is what God said to Jerusalem through the prophet: *"Sodom and her daughters will be built up* [10] *as in ancient times, and you and your daughters will become [as you were] in ancient times."* This is the meaning of the word: Sodom and her daughters will be inhabited as in ancient times, but they will be in subjection to Israel, and Jerusalem and her daughters will be in the splendour of the kingdom, as in ancient times." When I heard this response from him I thought much less of him, and I said, "When the words of the prophets are spoken in anger, is the whole message [spoken] in anger, or is perhaps part of it in anger and part of it in mercy?" He said, "The message of anger is completely full of anger, and there is no peace in it." And I said to him, "Now that you have explained to me that there is no peace in the message of anger, listen without disputing and do not blaspheme, and I will explain this

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[6] Isaiah 43:2-3
[7] A: "will be acquired"
[8] Ezekiel 16:55
[9] A: "And he said" instead of "He began…saying"
[10] A: "will be acquired"

word to you. From top to bottom, the whole message is spoken in anger, for he said to Jerusalem, *"As I live, says the Lord God, Sodom and her daughters have not acted as you and your daughters have acted."* [11] He also said to her, *"Be ashamed and bear your disgrace, since you have surpassed your sisters in your sins, and they have become more righteous than you."* [12] Now that he said that Sodom and her daughters have become more righteous than Jerusalem and her daughters, and that Jerusalem has surpassed Sodom in her sins, it would be fitting if, when Israel is gathered together,[13] her habitation was in Sodom and Gomorrah. Their vine is from the vine of Sodom and from the stock of Gomorrah.[14] Their grapes are bitter, and their clusters are bitter for them. Isaiah also called them 'rulers of Sodom' and 'people of Gomorrah'.[15] If Israel is to be gathered together, it would be fitting if they lived in Sodom and Gomorrah with the rulers of Sodom and the people of Gomorrah, on the vine of Sodom and on the stock of Gomorrah. [It would be fitting] if they ate bitter grapes and picked clusters of bitterness, if they ate the daughters of the serpent [16] and wore the web of the spider,[17] made use of the wild grapes of the vineyard, and turned into rejected silver.[18] Sodom and her daughters, who have become more righteous than Jerusalem, will be rebuilt[19] as in ancient times, but Jerusalem, who has surpassed Sodom in her sins, will continue in her sins and remain in her desolation forever, until the fulfillment of the decrees." [20]

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[11] Ezekiel 16:48

[12] Ezekiel 16:52

[13] Both manuscripts (A and *B*) have ܡܬܩܪܝ ('to be called') here, which Wright and Parisot have emended to ܡܬܟܢܫ. Pierre finds the emendation unnecessary, but the sentence is awkward without it.

[14] Deuteronomy 32:31

[15] Isaiah 1:10

[16] Cf. 14.37, n. 138

[17] Isaiah 59:5

[18] Jeremiah 6:30

[19] A: "acquired"

[20] Daniel 9:27

4. Ezekiel said, *"This is the wickedness of Sodom and her daughters: they did not take the destitute and the poor by the hand, and when I saw these things in them, I ruined them."* [21] Calculate and you will see that from the time that Sodom was ruined up to when Jerusalem was built was eight hundred and ninety six years.[22] From the time when Abraham received a message from God through the angel (*"At this time next year I will return to you, and your wife Sarah will have a son."* [23]) until Jacob went to Egypt, [there was] two hundred years. The descendants of Jacob were in Egypt for two hundred and five years. All these years, from when Isaac was conceived and Sodom ruined, total four hundred and nineteen. Between the exodus of Israel from Egypt and the building up of Jerusalem [with] its great building by Solomon (when the temple was built) was four hundred and eighty years. Thus all the years from the conception of Isaac and the ruin of Sodom to [the construction of] the great building of Jerusalem [total] eight hundred and ninety-six. From the great building of Jerusalem to the destruction of Jerusalem was four hundred and twenty-five years. The total of all these years, from the time of the ruin of Sodom to the destruction of Jerusalem, is one thousand three hundred and twenty-one years. Sodom and her daughters were destroyed all these years before Jerusalem, and she who was more righteous than Jerusalem has not yet been resettled. The full total of the years from the ruin of Sodom to the six hundred and fifty-fifth year of the kingdom of Alexander, son of Philip the Macedonian, is two thousand and seventy-six. From the time when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians to this time was nine hundred and fifty-five years. After the Babylonians destroyed it, Jerusalem was inhabited for those seventy weeks about which Daniel testified. Then it was destroyed with a final destruction by the Romans, and it will never again be inhabited, since it will remain desolate until the fulfillment of the decrees. The total of the

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[21] Ezekiel 16:49

[22] The figures that follow do not add up correctly as they are given in the manuscripts. Parisot and Wright suggested various emendations, but here the manuscripts are followed.

[23] Genesis 18:14

years of the ruin of Jerusalem, [from its] first to [its] last, is four hundred and sixty-five, and if you subtract from this the seventy years in Babylon, there are three hundred and ninety-five years.

5. I have written out this whole proof for you because the Jews boast, "We will yet be gathered together." If Sodom, whose wickedness was not as great as Jerusalem's, is still uninhabited (and we say that it will never be inhabited), how will Jerusalem, whose wickedness was greater than Sodom and her daughters, be inhabited? God did not have mercy on Sodom for two thousand and seventy-six years. Should we say that he will have mercy on Jerusalem, when three hundred and ninety-five years [have passed] from the day it was destroyed, according to the calculation written out above? He said, *"Sodom and her daughters will be established as in ancient times,"* and he said to Jerusalem, *"You and your daughters will be as in ancient times."* This is the meaning of these sayings: they will never be inhabited, since the Lord has cursed the land that angered him: *"It will not be sown or be productive, and no herb will emerge from it, but it will be like Sodom and Gomorrah, with whom the Lord was angry and would not be reconciled."* [24] Be persuaded, O hearer, that Sodom and her daughters will never be inhabited, but they will be as they were in ancient times, as in that time when they were still uninhabited, when God was angry with them and would not be reconciled with them. Jerusalem and her daughters will be as they were in ancient times, as in [that] former time when the mountain of the Amorites was sitting in ruin (on it Abraham built an altar, upon which he tied Isaac his son),[25] and as it was desolate when David bought the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite and built an altar there.[26] Understand and see that the mountain on which Abraham offered his son is the mountain of the Jebusite, which is Jerusalem. This site of the threshing floor which David bought from Araunah is [where] the temple was built. Thus, Jerusalem will be in ruins, as in ancient times. Understand that when Ezekiel prophesied this mes-

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[24] Deuteronomy 29:33
[25] Genesis 22:9
[26] 2Samuel 24:18-25; 1Chronicles 21:18-28

sage, Jerusalem was still inhabtited in its greatness, and those who were insider her were rebelling against the king of Babylon. The message that the prophet spoke he spoke in anger and rebuke against Jerusalem.

6. Understand and see, hearer, that if God had given hope to Sodom and her companions, he would not have ruined them with fire and brimstone, the sign of the last day of the world. Rather, he would have delivered them into the hands of one of the kingdoms to be chastised, just as it is written that when Jeremiah caused the peoples and the kingdoms to drink the cup of wrath, he said concerning each one of the cities, *"After they drink the cup of wrath, I will make the captives of Elam, Tyre, Sidon, the Ammonites, Moab, and Edom*[27] *return."* [28] Concerning each one of these kingdoms he said, *"At the end of days, I will make its captives return."* [29] We see that Tyre was inhabited and flourishing after she had wandered for seventy years, after she had received pay for her services, and after she had prostituted herself with all the kingdoms. She took the harp, played well, and sang many songs.[30] The country of Elam was also inhabited and flourishing, but concerning Babylon Jeremiah said, *"Babylon will fall and not rise."* [31] To this day and forever it lies in ruin. And concerning Jerusalem he said, *"The virgin of Israel will fall and not rise again. She has been left on the ground, and there is no one who will raise her up."* [32] Now, if this prophecy that Jeremiah spoke concerning Babylon is true, then [what he said] concerning Jerusalem is also true and trustworthy. Isaiah said to Jerusalem, *"I will not be angry with you or rebuke you again."* [33] He will certainly not be angry with her, nor will he ever rebuke her, since in her ruin, he does not rebuke her, nor does she anger him.

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[27] *B* omits "and Edom"
[28] See Jeremiah 25:15-29
[29] Jeremiah 48:47; 49:6, 39
[30] Isaiah 23:15-16
[31] Jeremiah 51:64
[32] Amos 5:1-2
[33] Isaiah 54:9

7. As for those who reproach us [and say], "You are persecuted, but you will not be saved!", let them be ashamed, since at all times they were persecuted, and it was many years until they were saved. They were subjugated in Egypt for two hundred and twenty-five years. The Midianites subjugated Israel in the days of Barak and Deborah. The Moabites ruled over them in the days of Ehud, the Ammonites in the days of Jephthah, the Philistines in the days of Samson as well as in the days of Eli and Samuel the prophet, the Edomites in the days of Ahab, the Assyrians in the days of Hezekiah, and [finally] the king of Babylon uprooted and scattered them from their country. Though he tested and chastised them a great deal, they did not flourish. As he said to them, *"I have beaten your children in vain, and they did not receive instruction."* [34] He also said, *"I have cut off the prophets and killed them with the speech of my mouth."* [35] He said to Jerusalem, *"Be instructed by diseases and plagues, Jerusalem, or else my soul will depart from you!"* [36] But they abandoned him and worshipped idols, as Jeremiah said of them: *"Go to the distant islands, and send [word] to Kedar. Consider carefully, and see if there is [anything] like this: [see] if the people change their gods, those that are not gods. My people have exchanged their honour for that which is worthless. Be amazed at this, heaven; tremble and fear greatly, says the Lord. My people have done two evil things: they have abandoned me, the source of living water, and they have gone and dug cisterns for themselves, shattered cisterns which are unable to hold water."* [37] The shattered cisterns represent reverence for images and idols, and heaven is amazed at them because they worshipped the powers of heaven. Heaven will receive a punishment: it will be rolled up like a scroll, and all its host will wither.[38]

8. This whole discourse that I have written to you above, my friend, concerns the reproach of a Jewish man against our people. But now, as much as I am able, I will prove with respect to the per-

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[34] Jeremiah 2:30
[35] Hosea 6:5
[36] Jeremiah 6:8
[37] Jeremiah 2:10-13
[38] Isaiah 34:4

secuted that they received a good reward. The persecutors, however, have remained in contempt and disgrace.

9. Jacob was persectued and Esau was the persecutor. Jacob received the blessings and the birthright, but Esau was rejected from both. Joseph was persectued and his brothers were the persecutors. Joseph was elevated and his persecutors bowed down to him; his dreams and visions were fulfilled. The persecuted Joseph was the image of the persecuted Jesus: the father of Joseph clothed him in a long-sleeved tunic,[39] and the Father of Jesus clothed him in a body from the Virgin. The father of Joseph loved him more than his brothers,[40] and Jesus was his Father's Loved and Cherished One. Joseph saw visions and dreamed dreams, and Jesus fulfilled the visions[41] and the prophets. Joseph was a shepherd, along with his brothers, and Jesus is the Chief of the Shepherds. When Joseph's father sent him to visit his brothers, they saw that he was coming and they made plans to kill him. When his Father sent Jesus to visit his brothers, they said, *"This is the heir. Let us kill him!"* [42] The brothers of Joseph threw him into a pit,[43] and the brothers of Jesus sent him down among the dead. Joseph came up from the pit, and Jesus rose from among the dead. After he came up from the pit, Joseph ruled over his brothers. After he rose from among the dead, the Father of Jesus gave him a great and excellent name,[44] so that his brothers might be in subjection to him and his enemies placed under his feet.[45] When Joseph made himself known to his brothers, they were ashamed and afraid and amazed at his majesty. When Jesus comes at the end of time so that his majesty will be revealed, his brothers, who previously crucified him, will be ashamed and afraid and troubled. By the counsel of Judah, Joseph was sold into

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[39] Genesis 37:3.
[40] Genesis 37:3
[41] *B*: "vision"
[42] Matthew 21:38
[43] Genesis 37:24
[44] Philippians 2:9
[45] Ephesians 1:22

Egypt, and by Judas Iscariot, Jesus was betrayed to the Jews. When they sold him, Joseph gave no response to his brothers, and Jesus did not speak or give a response to the judges who were judging him.[46] Joseph's master wickedly put him in prison, and Jesus was condemned by his own people. Joseph gave up two garments, one to his brothers and one to his master's wife. Jesus gave up his garments, and the soldiers divided them among themselves.[47] Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharoah and became lord of Egypt.[48] Jesus was about thirty years old[49] when he came to the Jordan to be baptized, received the Spirit, and went out to preach. Joseph supplied the Egyptians with bread, and Jesus supplied the whole world with the bread of life. Joseph married the daughter of the wicked and unclean priest, and Jesus brought the Church to himself from the unclean peoples. Joseph died and was buried in Egypt, and Jesus died and was buried in Jerusalem. The brothers of Joseph brought his bones up from Egypt, and the Father of Jesus raised him up from among the dead, and brought his body up with him to heaven uncorrupted.

10. Moses, too, was persecuted, just as Jesus was persecuted. When he was born, Moses was concealed so that he would not be killed by his persecutors.[50] When he was born, Jesus was made to flee to Egypt so that Herod, his persecutor, would not kill him.[51] In the days when Moses was born, they drowned infants in the river,[52] and at the birth of Jesus the infants of Bethlehem and the surrounding area were killed.[53] To Moses God said, *"The men who were seeking your life have died."* [54] In Egypt, the angel said to Joseph,

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[46] Matthew 27:14; Mark 15:5; Luke 23:9
[47] Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:24
[48] Genesis 41:46
[49] Luke 3:23
[50] Exodus 2:2
[51] Matthew 2:13
[52] Exodus 1:22
[53] Matthew 2:16
[54] Exodus 4:19

"Arise! Take the infant and go to the land of Israel, since those who were seeking to seize his life have died." [55] Moses brought his people out from the slavery of Pharoah, and Jesus saved all the peoples from the slavery of Satan. Moses was raised in the house of Pharoah, and Jesus was raised in Egypt when Joseph was made to flee there. Miriam stood at the edge of the river when Moses floated on the water,[56] and Mary gave birth to Jesus after the angel Gabriel brought news to her.[57] When Moses sacrificed the lamb, the firstborns of the Egyptians were killed. When they crucified Jesus, the True Lamb, by killing him the people who killed him died. Moses brought down manna for his people, and Jesus gave his body for the peoples. Moses made the bitter waters sweet with a piece of wood, and Jesus sweetened our bitterness through his crucifixion on the wood of his Cross. Moses brought down the Law for his people, and Jesus gave his testaments to the peoples. Moses defeated Amalek with his outstretched hands, and Jesus defeated Satan by the sign[58] of his crucifixion. Moses brought forth water from a rock for his people,[59] and Jesus sent Simon the Rock to carry his teaching among the peoples. Moses lifted the veil from his face, and God spoke with him.[60] Jesus lifted the veil from the faces of the peoples, so that they could hear and receive his teaching.[61] Moses placed his hand on his apostles and they received the priesthood. Jesus placed his hand on his apostles and they received the Holy Spirit. Moses went up a mountain and died there.[62] Jesus went up to heaven and sat at the right hand of his Father.

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[55] Matthew 2:20

[56] Exodus 2:4

[57] Luke 1:26. Perhaps Aphrahat is drawing a parallel between the water of the river and the water of birth.

[58] *B*: "suffering"

[59] Exodus 17:6; Numbers 20:9-11

[60] Exodus 34:34

[61] 2Corinthians 3:16

[62] Deuteronomy 34:1-5

11. Joshua son of Nun was also persecuted, just as Jesus, our Saviour, was persecuted. Joshua son of Nun was persecuted by the unclean peoples, and Jesus, our Saviour, was persecuted by the foolish people. Joshua son of Nun took the inheritance from his persecutors and gave it to his people. Jesus, our Saviour, took the inheritance from his persecutors and gave it to the foreign peoples. Joshua son of Nun made the sun stand still in the sky and took vengeance on the peoples, his persecutors. Jesus, our Saviour, made the sun set in the middle of the day, so that the persecuting people who had crucified him might be ashamed. Joshua son of Nun divided the inheritance for his people, and Jesus, our Saviour, promised to give the peoples the land of life. Joshua son of Nun gave life to Rahab, the prostitute,[63] and Jesus, our Saviour, gathered together and gave life to the prostituted assembly. On the seventh day, Joshua son of Nun overturned and tore down the walls of Jericho.[64] On the seventh day which is the Sabbath of the rest of God, Jesus, our Saviour, will [make] this world dissolve and fall [apart]. Joshua son of Nun stoned Achan, who stole from what had been devoted to God.[65] Jesus, our Saviour, separated Judah from the disciples, his friends, because he had stolen from the money for the poor.[66] When he was dying, Joshua son of Nun set up a witness for his people.[67] When he was taken up, Jesus, our Saviour, set up a witness for his apostles.[68]

12. Jephthah was also persecuted, just as Jesus was persecuted. The brothers of Jephthah drove him out of his father's house,[69] and the brothers of Jesus drove him out, raised him up, and crucified him. The persecuted Jephthah stood at the head of his people, and the persecuted Jesus rose and became King of the peoples.

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[63] Joshua 6:17
[64] Joshua 6:15
[65] Judges 7:25
[66] John 12:6
[67] Joshua 24:2
[68] Matthew 28:18; cf. Mark 16:19
[69] Judges 11:2

Jephthah took a vow and lifted up his first-born daughter as an offering,[70] and Jesus went up as an offering to his Father on behalf of all the peoples.

13. David was also persecuted, just as Jesus was persecuted. David was annointed by Samuel to be king in the place of Saul, who had sinned.[71] Jesus was annointed by John to be High Priest in the place of the priests who had transgressed the Law.[72] David was persecuted after his annointing, and Jesus was persecuted after his annointing. David ruled first over only one tribe, and afterwards over all of Israel. Jesus ruled first over the few who believed in him, but in the end he will rule over the whole world. Samuel annointed David when he was thirty years old, and Jesus received ordination from John when he was about thirty years old.[73] David married two daughters of the king,[74] and Jesus married two daughters of kings, the assembly of the people and the assembly of the peoples. David rewarded his enemy Saul with goodness, and Jesus taught, *"Pray for your enemies."* [75] David [was] the heart of God,[76] and Jesus [was] the Son of God. David received the kingdom from Saul, his persecutor, and Jesus received the kingdom of Israel, his persecutor. David wept in his mourning over his enemy Saul when he died,[77] and Jesus wept over Jerusalem, his persecutor, because it was going to be destroyed.[78] David handed over the kingdom to Solomon and died.[79] was gathered to his people. Jesus handed over the keys to Simon,[80] and ascended and went to the One who sent him. Because

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[70] Judges 11:30-39
[71] 1Samuel 16:1-13
[72] Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:31-34
[73] Luke 3:23
[74] Cf. 1Samuel 18
[75] Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:28
[76] 1Samuel 13:14
[77] 2Samuel 1:12
[78] Luke 19:41-44
[79] Literally: "and was gathered to his people"
[80] Matthew 16:19

of David the sins of his offspring are forgiven, and because of Jesus the sins of the peoples are forgiven.

14. Elijah was also persecuted, just as Jesus was persecuted. The murderess Jezebel persecuted Elijah, and a persecuting and murderous assembly persecuted Jesus. Elijah held back rain from the sky because of the sins of Israel,[81] and at his coming Jesus held back the Spirit from the prophets because of the sins of the people. Elijah destroyed the servants of Baal, and Jesus trampled Satan and his armies.[82] Elijah brought the widow's son back to life,[83] and Jesus brought the widow's son back to life,[84] as well as Lazarus and the daughter of the synagogue ruler.[85] Elijah fed the widow from a little bread,[86] and Jesus satisfied thousands from a little bread.[87] Elijah was taken up in a chariot to heaven,[88] and our Saviour ascended and sat at the right hand of his Father. Elisha received the spirit of Elijah, and Jesus breathed on the faces of his apostles.[89]

15. Elisha was persecuted, just as Jesus was persecuted. Elisha was persecuted by the son of Ahab, the son of the murderess, and Jesus was persecuted by the murderous people. Elisha prophesied, and there was abundance in Samaria.[90] Jesus said, *"Whoever eats my body and drinks my blood will live forever."* [91] Elisha satisfied one hundred men from a little bread,[92] and with five loaves Jesus satisfied four thousand [people], not including women and children.[93] Elisha

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[81] 1Kings 17:1
[82] Luke 10:19
[83] 1Kings 17:17-24
[84] Luke 7:11-17
[85] John 11:1-46
[86] 1Kings 17:7-16
[87] Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14
[88] 2Kings 2:11-12
[89] *B*: "disciples". John 20:22
[90] 2Kings 7:1
[91] A: "Whoever eats my bread will live forever." John 6:55, 59
[92] 2Kings 4:42-44
[93] Matthew 14:13-21

made oil from water,[94] and Jesus made wine from water.[95] Elisha saved the widow from her creditor,[96] and Jesus saved the peoples [from their] offences. Elisha made iron float and wood sink.[97] Jesus raised up our sunkenness and sank our depravity. One dead man came alive on the bones of Elisha,[98] and all the peoples who were dying in their sins were thrown upon the bones of Jesus and lived.[99]

16. Hezekiah was also persecuted, just as Jesus was persecuted. Hezekiah was persecuted and scorned by his enemy Sennacherib. Jesus was scorned by the foolish people. Hezekiah prayed and defeated his enemy.[100] Our enemy was defeated by the crucifixion of Jesus. Hezekiah [was] the king of all Israel, and Jesus is the king of all the peoples. The sun moved backwards because Hezekiah was sick,[101] and the sun in its brightness grew dark because of the suffering of Jesus.[102] The enemies of Hezekiah became lifeless corpses,[103] and the enemies of Jesus will be thrown beneath his feet.[104] Hezekiah was from the tribe of the house of David, and Jesus is the Son of David according to the flesh. Hezekiah said, *"There will be peace and justice in my days."* [105] Jesus said to his disciples, *"I am leaving my peace with you."* [106] Hezekiah prayed and was healed of his sickness.[107] Jesus prayed and rose from among the dead.

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[94] Cf. 2Kings 4:1-7
[95] John 2:1-11
[96] 2Kings 4:1-2
[97] 2Kings 6:1-7
[98] 2Kings 13:21
[99] *B*: "who were dying in their sins were considered worthy and lived because of the bones of Jesus"
[100] 2Kings 19:14-19
[101] 2Kings 20:9-11; Isaiah 38:7-8
[102] Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44-45
[103] 2Kings 19:35; 2Chronicles 32:21; Isaiah 37:36
[104] 1Corinthians 15:25
[105] 2Kings 20:19
[106] John 14:27
[107] 2Kings 20:1-7

Hezekiah added to his years after he rose from his sickness,[108] and Jesus received a great glory after his resurrection.[109] After his added [years], death ruled over Hezekiah. After he rose, death will never again have power over Jesus.[110]

17. Josiah was also persecuted, just as Jesus was persecuted. Josiah was persecuted and Pharoah the Lame killed him.[111] Jesus was persecuted and the people who were lamed through their sins killed him. Josiah purified the land of Israel from uncleanness,[112] and Jesus purified and made uncleanness pass away from all the earth. Josiah honoured and glorified the name of his God. Jesus said, *"I have glorified, and I will glorify."* [113] Josiah tore his clothing because of the wickedness of Israel,[114] and Jesus tore the veil of the entrance to the holy temple because of the wickedness of the people.[115] Josiah said, *"Great is the wrath that is coming upon this people!"* [116] Jesus said, *"Wrath will come upon this people, and they will fall by the blade of the sword."* [117] Josiah expelled uncleanness from the holy temple, and Jesus expelled unclean merchants from the house of his Father.[118] The daughters of Israel mourned and lamented over Josiah, as Jeremiah said, *"Weep over Josiah, daughters of Israel!"* [119] The daughters of Israel wept and mourned over Jesus, as Zechariah said, *"Let the land mourn, families upon families!"* [120]

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[108] 2Kings 20:6; Isaiah 38:5

[109] A omits "after his resurrection"

[110] Romans 6:9

[111] 2Kings 23:29-30; 2Chronicles 35:20-24. In rabbinic sources, Pharoah Neco is called "the Lame" (cf. 23.19).

[112] 2Kings 23:11-20; 2Chronicles 34:3-7

[113] John 12:28

[114] 2Kings 22:11; 2Chronicles 34:19

[115] Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45

[116] 2Kings 22:13

[117] Luke 21:23-24

[118] John 2:13-17

[119] 2Chronicles 35:25

[120] Zechariah 12:12

18. Daniel was also persecuted, just as Jesus was persecuted. Daniel was persecuted by the Chaldeans, an assembly of godless men. Jesus was persecuted by the Jews, an assembly of wicked men. The Chaldeans slandered Daniel, and the Jews slandered Jesus before the governor.[121] They threw Daniel into a pit of lions, but he was delivered and rose up vindicated from within it.[122] Jesus was made to go down to the pit among the dead, but he ascended and death had no power over him. They hoped that Daniel would not come up again when he fell into the pit, and concerning Jesus they said, *"Now that he has fallen, he will not rise again."* [123] The mouth[s] of the greedy and devouring lions were shut by Daniel, and the mouth of greedy death, the devourer of appearances, was shut by Jesus. They sealed the pit of Daniel and guarded it carefully.[124] They guarded the tomb of Jesus carefully, since they said, *"Order them to keep watch over the tomb."* [125] When Daniel came up his slanderers were confused, and when Jesus rose all those who had crucified him were confused. The king who judged Daniel was greatly troubled by the wickedness of the Chaldeans, his slanderers.[126] Pilate, the judge of Jesus, was greatly troubled because he knew that the Jews were wickedly slandering him.[127] Through the prayer of Daniel the captives of his people went up from Babylon. Jesus prayed and made all the captives of the peoples return. Daniel interpreted the visions and dreams of Nebuchadnezzar,[128] and Jesus explained and interpreted the visions of the Torah and the Prophets.[129] When he explained the vision of Belshazzar, Daniel became third in command in the kingdom. When Jesus fulfilled the visions and the prophets, his Father handed over to him all author-

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[121] Matthew 26:59-61; Mark 14:55-59
[122] Daniel 6:17-25
[123] Psalm 41:8
[124] Daniel 6:18
[125] Matthew 27:64
[126] Daniel 6:15
[127] Matthew 27:18; Mark 15:10
[128] Daniel 2, 4
[129] Luke 24:25-27

ity in heaven and on earth.[130] Daniel saw wonders and spoke secrets, and Jesus revealed secrets and fulfilled what is written. Daniel was led away with the hostages[131] instead of his people, and the body of Jesus [became] a hostage in the place of all the peoples. Because of Daniel, the anger of the king toward the Chaldeans was quelled, and they were not killed. Because of Jesus, the anger of his Father toward all the peoples was quelled, and they were not killed and did not die from their sins. Daniel made a request of the king, and [the king] gave his brothers authority over the affairs of the province of Babylon. Jesus made a request of God, and [God] gave his brothers (his disciples) power over Satan and his army. Daniel said of Jerusalem: *"Until the decrees [are fulfilled] it will remain in desolation."* [132] Jesus said of Jerusalem: *"Not one stone will be left on [another] stone, since she did not know the day of her majesty."* [133] Daniel saw the weeks that remained for his people, and Jesus came and fulfilled them.

19. Hananiah and his brothers were also persecuted, just as Jesus was persecuted. Hananiah and his brothers were persecuted by Nebuchadnezzar, and the people of the Jews persecuted Jesus. Hananiah and his brothers fell into a fiery furnace, but it became as cool as dew over them,[134] those who were righteous. Jesus went down to the place of darkness, crushed its gates, and brought forth its prisoners. Hananiah and his brothers came up from the fiery furnace and flames burned their slanderers.[135] Jesus lived and came up from the darkness, and his slanderers and those who crucified him will burn in flames in the end. When Hananiah and his brothers came up from the furnace, Nebuchadnezzar, the king, trembled and was terrified. When Jesus rose from among the dead, the people, who had crucified him, were terrified and trembled. Hananiah

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[130] Matthew 28:18
[131] Cf. 6.10; 23.50
[132] Daniel 9:26
[133] Luke 19:44
[134] Daniel 3:50
[135] Daniel 3:22

and his brothers did not worship the image of the king of Babylon,[136] and Jesus held back the peoples from the worship of dead images. Because of Hananiah and his brothers, the peoples and tongues glorified the God who had rescued them from the fire. Because of Jesus, the peoples and all the tongues glorify he who rescued his Son, who did not see corruption. The fire had no power over the clothing of Hananiah and his brothers. The fire at the end will have no power over the bodies of all the righteous who believe in Jesus.

20. Mordecai was also persecuted, just as Jesus was persecuted. Mordecai was persecuted by the wicked Haman, and Jesus was persecuted by the rebellious people. Through his prayer, Mordecai rescued his people from the hands of Haman, and through his prayer, Jesus rescued his people from the hands of Satan. Mordecai was rescued from the hands of his persecutor, and Jesus was delivered from the hands of his persecutor. Because he sat and put on sackcloth, Mordecai saved Esther and his people from destruction. Because he put on a body and humbled himself, Jesus saved the Church and its members. Because of Mordecai, Esther pleased the king, and entered and sat in place of Vashti,[137] who did not do his will. Because of Jesus, the Church pleased God and has gone in to the King in place of the assembly that did not do his will. Mordecai admonished Esther and her maidservants to fast, so that she and her people might be rescued from the hands of Haman.[138] Jesus admonished his Church and its offspring, so that she and her children might be saved from wrath. Mordecai received the honour of Haman, his persecutor,[139] and Jesus, instead of his persecutors from the foolish people, received a great glory from his Father. Mordecai stomped on the neck of Haman, his persecutor, and the enemies of Jesus will be placed beneath his feet. Haman proclaimed before Mordecai, *"This is what will be done for the man whom*

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[136] Daniel 3:12
[137] Esther 2:17
[138] Esther 4:16
[139] Esther 8:2

the king wishes to honour!" [140] The proclaimers of Jesus went out from the people, his persecutors, and said, *"This is Jesus, the Son of God!"* [141] The blood of Mordecai was avenged upon Haman and his children, and the persecutors of Jesus received his blood upon themselves and upon their children.[142]

21. I have written these reminders to you, my friend, about the persecuted Jesus and the persecuted righteous, so that those who are persecuted today for the sake of the persecuted Jesus might be consoled, since he has written to us and encouraged us by his own example. He said, *"If they persecute me, they will also persecute you. They will persecute you because you are not of this world, just as I am not of it."* [143] Earlier he wrote to us, *"Your fathers, brothers, and families will betray you, and every person will hate you because of my name."* [144] He also taught us, *"When they bring you before magistrates, before authorities, and before kings [who] hold [power] in the world, do not consider beforehand what to say or how you will respond. I will give you a mouth and wisdom [to speak], so that your enemies will not be able to conquer you. It will not be you speaking, but the Holy Spirit of your Father will be speaking in you."* [145] This is the Spirit that spoke through the mouth of Jacob to Esau, his persecutor, and the Spirit of wisdom that spoke before Pharoah the persecuted Joseph. [This is] the Spirit that spoke through the mouth of Moses, in all the wonders that he did in the land of Egypt, the Spirit of knowledge that was given to Joshua son of Nun when Moses placed his hand on him and the peoples who persecuted him were destroyed and perished before him. [This is] the Spirit that sang in the mouth of the persecuted David, through which David sang and relieved Saul, his persecutor, of an evil spirit, the Spirit that clothed Elijah, through whom it rebuked Jezebel and

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[140] Esther 6:11

[141] Matthew 27:54; Mark 15:39

[142] Matthew 27:25

[143] John 15:20, 19; 17:14

[144] Matthew 10:21-22; 24:9; cf. Mark 13:12-13; Luke 21:16-17; John 16:21

[145] Matthew 10:19-20; cf. Mark 13:11; Luke 12:11-12; 21:14-15

Ahab, his persecutors. [This is] the Spirit that spoke through Elisha and prophesied and made known to the king, his persecutor, what would happen in the future, the Spirit that seethed in the mouth of Micaiah when he rebuked Ahab, his persecutor: *"If you truly turn back, the Lord has not spoken through me."* [146] [This is] the Spirit that empowered Jeremiah, through which he stood boldy and rebuked Zedekiah, the Spirit that guarded Daniel and his brothers in the land of Babylon, and the Spirit that saved Mordecai and Esther in the place of their captivity.

22. Hear these names of witnesses, confessors, and the persecuted, my friend: Abel was killed, and his blood called out from the earth. Jacob was persecuted and he fled and became an exile. Joseph was persecuted and was sold and fell into a pit. Moses was persecuted and fled to Midian. Joshua son of Nun was persecuted and made war. Jephthah, Samson, Gideon, Barak: these [people] were also persecuted. Of these the blessed apostle said, *"Time is too short for me to recite their victories."* [147] David was also persecuted by Saul, and he walked on mountains and in caves and valleys. Samuel was also persecuted and he mourned over Saul.[148] Hezekiah, too, was persecuted and imprisoned in affliction. Elijah was persecuted and walked in the desert.[149] Elisha was persecuted and became an exile. Micaiah was persecuted and thrown into prison.[150] Jeremiah was persecuted and thrown into a filthy pit. Daniel was persecuted and thrown into a pit of lions. Hananiah and his brothers were also persecuted and they were thrown into a fiery furnace. Mordecai and Esther and their people were persecuted by Haman. Judah Maccabee and his brothers were persecuted, and they also endured insult. The seven brothers, sons of the blessed woman, endured mistreatment through bitter tortures and became true confessors

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[146] 1Kings 22:28
[147] Hebrews 11:32
[148] 1Samuel 15:35
[149] 1Kings 19:4
[150] 1Kings 22:27

and witnesses.[151] Eleazar, old and advanced in years, was a good example: he confessed and became a perfect witness.[152]

23. The witness of Jesus was great and excellent! In affliction and in confession he surpassed all who went before and who came after. After him [came] the faithful witness Stephen, whom the Jews stoned. Simon and Paul were also perfect witnesses. James and John walked in the footsteps of Christ, their Master. In various places, from [the time of] the apostles until now, true witnesses have confessed and gone out. Furthermore, for our brothers in the west in the days of Diocletian, a great affliction and persecution came against the whole Church of God, in all of its districts. Churches were pulled down and uprooted, confessors confessed and many were witnesses. He came to them in mercy after they had been chastized. These things have also happened in our days because of our sins, and so that the things that have been written might be fulfilled. As our Saviour said, *"These things are going to happen."* [153] The apostle also said, *"Set over us is this cloud of testimony,"* [154] which is our glory, in which many confess and are killed.

The demonstration on persecution is completed.

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[151] 2Maccabees 7
[152] 2Maccabees 6:18-31
[153] Matthew 24:6; Luke 21:9
[154] Hebrews 12:1

DEMONSTRATION 22: *ON DEATH AND THE END TIMES*

I. CONTENTS

1 Adam's transgression makes death rule over all
2 God testified through Moses that the rule of death would end
3 death is in mourning because Enoch and Elijah eluded his grasp, and because the testimony of Moses, Hannah, and Isaiah show that his rule will end
4-5 through his death and resurrection, Christ has plundered the domain of death and fatally poisoned him
6 death takes away the gains of the powerful and the wealthy, but their sins are held against them until the judgement
7 death is no respecter of persons: all are subject to him
8 those who enjoy life fear death, but those who suffer look forward to it
9 peacemakers live as sojourners in this world, in which they do not place their trust
10 worldly possessions do not endure, but the wise send their treasures ahead to the place of life
11 the wise forget what they have learned while in death's domain
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13 marriage will be obsolete, and all deficiencies overcome; though heaven cannot be described adequately, but can be compared to various things
14 death takes everyone captive, and ends their activities
15 Christ will raise all the dead before the judgement, but the righteous who have kept the commandment will not be judged
16 righteous priests and Christians will not be judged, but will judge those priests who did not keep the Law
17 the wicked whose sins have multiplied and who have no

knowledge of God will not be judged, but return to Sheol
18-23 all except the very righteous and the very wicked will be judged according to their deeds
18 some return to Sheol, some inherit life, but in degrees
19 as the lights of the sky differ in brightness, so the reward of some exceeds that of others
20 a further comparison: a worker is paid according to how long he has worked
21 a further comparison: a king give different honours to different people
22 there are also different degrees of punishment
23 a further comparison: a king punishes by varying degrees
24 the wicked go down to Sheol, but the place of reward will be a new heaven and a new earth
25 a list of the first twenty-two demonstrations, with dates of writing
26 the author has not given the final word: other sages write well, but all wisdom comes from God and from his holy scriptures, whose resources can never be exhausted

II. TRANSLATION

1. Those who are honest and just and good and wise are not afraid nor do they tremble in the face of Death,[1] because of the great hope that is before them. They are always thinking about Death, [their] exodus, and [about] the last day when the children of Adam will be judged.[2] They know that through a decree of judgement Death has ruled, because Adam transgressed the commandment. As the apostle said, *"Death ruled from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin. In this way it came upon all the children of Adam, just as it had come upon Adam [himself]."* [3] How did Death rule from Adam to Moses? When God laid down the commandment for Adam, he

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[1] I have decided to capitalize the term 'Death' in most of its occurrences in this demonstration, since Aphrahat typically personifies this figure throughout.

[2] *B* has ܡܬܝܠܕܝܢ ("brought forth")

[3] Romans 5:12-14

warned him, and spoke to him as follows: *"On the day when you eat from the tree of the knowledge*[4] *of good and evil, you will certainly die."* [5] When he transgressed the commandment and ate from the tree, Death [began to] rule over him, and over all his descendants. Death rules even over those who have not sinned by transgressing the commandment [given to] Adam.

2. Why did [the apostle] say, *"Death ruled from Adam to Moses"*? And who is so lacking in knowledge so as to think that Death held sway only from Adam to Moses? Let [the matter] be understood from what he said: that [Death] came upon all people. Death did indeed come upon all people, from Moses to the end of the world, even though Moses proclaimed that its reign had come to an end. For when Adam transgressed the commandment and Death was decreed on his descendants, Death hoped to bind all people and become king over them forever. But when Moses came he proclaimed the resurrection, and Death knew that his reign was coming to an end. For Moses said, *"Reuben will live and not die, and will become numerous."* [6] And when the Holy One called to Moses from the bush he said to him, *"I am the God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob."* [7] When Death heard this utterance, he trembled and was afraid. He was disturbed and troubled because he knew that he had not become king forever over the children of Adam. From the moment that he heard God say to Moses, *"I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,"* Death was at a total loss, since he knew that God was the King[8] of the dead and of the living, and that the destiny of the children of Adam was to come forth from his darkness and rise up with their bodies. Notice, also, that Jesus our Saviour, when he repeated this utterance to the Sadducees (who were arguing with him

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[4] *B* omits "of the knowledge"
[5] Genesis 2:17
[6] Deuteronomy 33:6
[7] Exodus 3:6
[8] A omits "the king"

about the resurrection of the dead), said that *"God is not [God] of the dead, since everyone is living to him."* [9]

3. In order to make known to Death that his power over all the inhabitants of the world was not eternal, God transported Enoch to himself, since he was pleasing [to him], and made him deathless. He also brought Elijah to heaven, and Death did not rule over him. Hannah said, *"The Lord causes to die and causes to live; he sends [people] to Sheol and causes [them] to rise up [again]."* [10] Furthermore, Moses spoke as if from the mouth of God, *"I cause to die and I cause to live."* [11] Isaiah also said, *"Your dead will live, and their corpses will rise up; the sleepers of the dust will be awakened and will glorify you."* [12] When Death heard all these things, he was bewildered, and sat down in mourning.

4. When Jesus, the Slayer of Death, came, he put on a body from the seed of Adam, and was crucified in his body and experienced Death. And when [Death] perceived that [Jesus] had come down to him, he was shaken from his place, and was disturbed when he saw Jesus. He closed his gates and did not want to receive him. Then [Jesus] broke down his gates and went in to him, and began to liberate all his captives.[13] When the dead saw light in the darkness, they lifted up their heads from the bondage of Death; they looked and they saw the brightness of Christ the King. Then the powers of his darkness sat down in mourning, because Death had been removed from his position of authority. Death tasted the medicine that was his slayer, and that made his hands became feeble. He knew [then] that the dead would live and escape from their slavery to him. When [Christ] had afflicted Death by liberating his captives, [Death] wailed and cried out bitterly, and said, "Depart from my realm and do not enter in [again]! Who is this who comes alive to

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[9] Luke 20:38
[10] 1Samuel 2:6
[11] Deuteronomy 32:39
[12] Isaiah 26:19
[13] Literally: "possessions"

my realm?" Death saw that his darkness was beginning to come to an end, and that some of the righteous who were sleeping were rising up to ascend with [Christ]. While [Death] was crying out in terror, [Christ] made known to him that when he comes in the fullness of time, he would bring out all the prisoners from under his power, and that they would come out to him and see the light. Then, when Jesus had completed his ministry among the dead, Death released him from his realm, since he could not bear to have him there. He was not enjoyable food like all the [other] dead. He had no power over the Pure One, who was not given over to corruption.

5. With a sense of relief, [Death] released [Jesus]. But when Jesus came out from his realm, he left with him a poison (the promise of life), so that gradually his power would be diminished. [This is] like a man who has taken in a deadly poison with [his] food, which is given [to bring] life. When he realizes that he has taken in a deadly poison with his food, he vomits up the nourishment in which the deadly poison was mixed, but the power of this poison remains in his limbs, so that gradually the structure of his body breaks down and is destroyed. Jesus, the Dead One, has brought an end to Death. Through him life is made to reign and Death (of whom it is said *"Where is your victory, O Death?"* [14]) passes away.

6. Now, therefore, O children of Adam, all you over whom Death has ruled, be mindful of Death and remember life, and do not transgress the commandment as your primal father did. O kings, [upon whom] the diadem is tied, remember Death, which will take away the diadems that have been placed on your heads. He will be king over you until the time when you shall rise [again] for judgement. O you who are stately and exalted and proud, remember Death, which destroys stateliness, dissolves limbs, and separates joints; the body and its features will be given over to corruption. The exalted will be humbled by Death; the fierce and the strong will be buried in his darkness. He will take away all [those

[14] 1Corinthians 15:55

who are] proud, and they will be corrupted and become dust until the judgement. O you who are proud: remember Death! For when the time comes and you meet with him there, you will not be making use of your wealth and possessions! He will not place savoury food before you, nor will he prepare a sumptuous feast for you! There, the bodies of those who indulged themselves, living in luxury, will decay; they will withdraw from their luxury and remember it no more. Worms will consume their bodies, and they will clothe themselves in darkness over their beautiful garments. They do not keep in mind the end of this world, and that Death with trouble them when they go down to him. They will sit in sadness and in the shadow of Death, and they will not remember this world until the end comes and they rise for judgement. O you who pillage and exploit, [you who] defraud [your] neighbours, keep Death in mind and do not multiply your sins, for in that place sinners do not repent! The one who plunders his neighbour will not keep his own [possessions], and will go to the place where a person does not make use of wealth.[15] He will come to nothing and pass away from his honour, but his sins will be kept until the day of judgement.

7. O you who put your trust in this world! Let this world be despised in your eyes, for you are travellers and strangers within it, and you do not know the day on which you will be taken from it. For suddenly, Death will come and separate and lead away beloved children from their parents, and will separate parents from the children they cherish. He takes precious only-begotten children with him, and their parents are deprived of them and are disgraced. He separates precious friends for himself, and those who love them weep miserably over them. He leads away and imprisons with himself those who are desired for [their] beauty, so that he might spoil their features and destroy them. Those who have a pleasing appearance he takes to himself, and they become dust until the judgement. He takes brides away from their bridegrooms, and imprisons them in his bridal chamber, in his place of gloom. He takes

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[15] Syr. ܕܒܥܘܬܐ ܐܢܫ ܠܐ ܡܬܚܫܚ . A has ܕܒܒܥܘܬܐ ("where a person does not make use of petition").

away and separates bridegrooms from the virgins who were intended for them and betrothed in their name, and they sit in bitter mourning over them. He takes away and separates for himself all the beautiful youths, who had thought that they would not see Death until old age. He takes away and gathers to himself beloved newborn infants, whose parents are not yet satiated with them. He takes to himself the wealthy, those who live in luxury, and they leave their possessions like waves of the sea.[16] He takes to himself skilled craftsmen, who raise up the world with their impressive projects. He takes to himself the shrewd and the wise; they become simple, not distinguishing good from evil. He takes to himself the prosperous of this world; their possessions fall away from them and will never be restored. He takes to himself the strong and the mighty; their strength is humbled and weakened and brought to an end. On the day of Death, those who had been confident that their strength would not fail will have their bodies gathered[17] by those who are weaker than them, and those who assumed that they would be buried with honour will be devoured by dogs. Those who have confidence that they will be buried in the place where they were born do not even know whether or not they will die in dishonour in the place of their captivity. To those who assume that they will pass on their possessions to their children, it is not revealed that they will be plundered by their enemies. Death takes to himself brave men and warriors, who had thought to destroy much of the world. Death leads away those who adorn themselves with all kinds of pleasant things, and they receive the burial of an ass when they are buried. Death rules over the unborn, and imprisons them with himself before they are born. Death takes to himself those who are honoured with celebrations, and they are dishonoured when they go down to him, to the place of darkness where there is no light. He does not stand in awe of kings crowned with a diadem, nor does he revere those who are exalted or the fierce [warriors] who destroy the land. Death does not respect those who

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[16] Cf. Sirach 29:18

[17] Syr. ܟܢܫܝܢ . *B* has ܦܝܫܝܢ ("their bodies will remain with those who are weaker than them").

are honoured, nor does he receive bribes from the rich. Death does not neglect the poor, nor does his soul reject the one who has nothing. Death does not honour those who live in luxury, and with him the good are not distinguished from the evil. He does not take into consideration the [greater] honour of those who are old as compared to the young. He makes those who are masters of discernment become mindless. There with him, those who had possessions and who rushed around and wore themselves out are stripped of their belongings. He takes to himself both servants and their masters, and the masters are not honoured there more than their servants. The small and the great are there, and they do not hear the voice of the taskmaster. The servant who is set free from his master in that place takes no account of the one who had been enslaving him. Death binds and imprisons with himself [both] prison wardens and those who had been thrown into prison. Through Death the prisoners are released and no longer have any fear[18] of their oppressors.

8. Those who live in luxury fear Death, but those who are troubled hope that they will be quickly taken away. All the rich tremble [at the thought of] Death, but the poor long for it so as to rest from their labour. Death brings anxiety to those who are strong when they call it to mind, but those who are sick hope for it, so that through Death they might forget their pains. Young children are also afraid of Death, since when it comes upon them they [must] leave their pleasures, but those who are old and advanced in years and who are in need of daily bread pray for it.

9. Peacemakers remember Death, and they renounce and remove from themselves anger and enmity. They live as sojourners in this world, and gather provisions for [the journey] that is before them. They ponder the things that are above and meditate on them, but despise the things that are beneath their eyes. They send away their treasures to a secure place, a place where there are no

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[18] *B* omits "and no longer have any fear"

moths and no thieves.[19] They live in the world as strangers, citizens of a beloved[20] land, and they hope to be sent from this world and to go to the city, the place of the righteous. They afflict themselves in the place of their pilgrimage,[21] and they are not entangled or engaged in the places where they stay. Each day their faces look upwards, so that they might go to the resting place of their forefathers. They are like prisoners in this world, and like hostages they are kept for the King. They have absolutely no rest in this world, and no hope that it will continue forever. Those who gain possessions do not rejoice in them, and Death makes those who have children mourn. Those who build cities will not be left in them, and those who pursue and wear themselves out over [worldy] things are no different from fools. O person without sense, whose trust is in this world!

10. Remember, my friend; consider and perceive in your mind. Who is left in this world from previous generations, remaining forever? Death led away previous generations, the mighty and the strong and the clever. Who acquired many possessions and took them with him when he departed? That which was taken from the earth returns to it, and a person departs from his possessions naked. The wise who gain possessions send some of them before them, as Job says, *"The heavens are my witness,"* and, *"My brothers and my friends are with God."*[22] Our Lord also commanded those who acquire possessions to make friends for themselves in heaven, and to store up treasures there.[23]

11. You should also remember Death, O wise scribe, so that your heart will not become proud and forget the sentence of judgement.

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[19] Matthew 6:19-20; Luke 12:33

[20] Both A and *B* have ܪܚܡܝܐ . Though the plural makes no sense, there is no reason to amend this (with Wright and Parisot) to ܪܚܝܩ ("distant").

[21] Syr. ܪܗܛܗܕ . *B* has ܪܗܛܐ ("repentance").

[22] Job 16:19-20

[23] Luke 16:9

Death does not ignore the wise, nor does it make exceptions for the clever. Death leads away wise scribes, and they forget what they have learned until that time when all the righteous will arise.

12. In that place they will forget this world. They will have no needs, and they will love one another with with an overflowing love. There will be no heaviness in their bodies, and they will fly quickly like doves to their windows. Never again in their intelligences will they remember wickedness there, and no impurity will arise in their hearts. In that place, there will be no natural desire, for they will be weaned of all appetites. Anger and lust will not arise in their hearts, and they will have cast away everything that gives birth to sin. Love for each other will burn in their hearts, and no trace of hatred will be established among them. They will not need to build houses there, since they will live in light, in the dwelling places of the holy ones. There will be no need for woven garments, since they will be clothed in light forever.[24] There will be no need for food, since they will recline at his table and be fed forever. The air that is there is pleasant and agreeable; its light shines forth and is attractive and beautiful. Wonderful trees are planted there, whose fruits do not fail and whose leaves do not wither. Their high branches are glorious and their fragrance is sweet; a person will never be repulsed by the taste [of their fruit]. [That] place is spacious and unlimited, yet its inhabitants will see its distance as proximity. No inheritance will be divided there, and no one will say to his brother, 'This is mine and this is yours.' They will not be bound there by greedy desires, nor will they be led astray by memory. A person there will not love his neighbour with greater devotion, but they will all overflow with love for one another in the same way. [Men] will not take wives there and will not father children. Male will not be distinguished from female, but all [people] will be children of the Father who is in heaven, as the prophet said: *"Is there not one father for all of us? Is there not one God who created us?"*[25]

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[24] A has "in light, the eternal garment" ("forever" and "eternal" are the same word)

[25] Malachi 2:10

13. Our Lord and his apostle taught concerning what I have said (that wives will not be taken there, and that male will not be distinguished from female). For our Lord said, *"Those who will be considered worthy of that world and of that resurrection from the realm of the dead will not take wives, and no women will be [united] with men. For they cannot die, but have become like the angels of heaven and the children of God."* [26] And the apostle said, *"There is neither male nor female, neither slave nor free, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus."* [27] For God separated Eve from Adam in order to propagate the race, so that she might be the mother of all who live. However, in that world there is no female, just as there is no female in heaven [now],[28] or generation of children, or occurrence of desire. In that place there is no deficiency at all, but rather perfection and completion. The old will not die and the young will not grow old. It is because they expect to grow old and die that young men take wives and father children, so that when the fathers die the children will rise up in their place. All these things have relevance in this world, but in that place there is no lack, no deficiency, no desire, no childbirth, no ending, no dissipation, no Death, no destruction, no old age, no hatred, no anger, no jealousy, no trouble, no toil, no darkness, no night, no falsehood. In that place there is no lack whatsoever, and it is full of light, and life, and grace, and fullness, and abundance, and newness, and love, and all the good promises which have been written but not yet assigned. For there are things there that the eye has not seen and that the ear has not heard, [things] that have not risen up in the human heart. [These] things are not uttered, and no person is able to say [anything about them]. The apostle said, *"Things which God has prepared*

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[26] Luke 20:35-36

[27] Galatians 3:28

[28] Cf. 18.8. It is striking that Aphrahat here does not repeat the negation of both male and female as found in Paul. Given what follows, it would seem that Aphrahat automatically associates a whole series of negativities with the female state. See Lehto (2001) for an imperfect attempt on my part to unpack Aphrahat's attitude toward women (which managed to overlook both 18.8 and the present passage!).

for those who love him…" [29], but even if people speak much, they are not able to say [anything]. They are unable to report that which the eye has not seen, and it is inappropriate to speak of that which the ear has heard and the eye has seen as if they were like that which the ear has not heard. And who will be so rash as to say [anything] about that which has not risen up in the [human] heart, comparing it to that which has risen up in the [human] heart? But it is right for the one who speaks to liken and to call that place the home of God, the place of life, the perfect place, the place of light, the place of splendour, the Sabbath of God, the day of rest, the refreshment of the righteous, the delight of the just, the home and dwelling-place of the righteous and the holy ones, the place of our hope, the source of our strong trust, the place of our treasure, the place that will take away our weariness and remove our suffering and soothe our sighing. It is [quite] proper for us to name and to compare that place with these things.

14. Death also leads away kings, those who establish cities and strengthen themselves in their pride, and it does not neglect the rulers of countries. Death leads away and takes captive the greedy, who are not satisfied and do not say "Enough!" It is greedy for them with a greater greed than theirs. Death leads away those who plunder, and who lack the kindness to refrain from plundering their neighbours. Death leads away those who oppress, and through Death they are held back from wickedness. Death leads away those who persecute, and the persecuted have rest until they go to him. Death leads away those who swallow up their neighbours, and the disadvantaged and the wronged have rest for a little while, until they too are led away and go there. Death leads away those with many plans, and all that they have thought about is dissolved and comes to an end. People plan to do many things, but Death comes upon them suddenly and they are led away; afterwards they do not remember anything that they had thought about. A person makes plans for many years, but it is kept from him that he will not exist tomorrow. A human being boasts and exalts himself over his

[29] 1Corinthians 2:9

neighbour, but Death comes to him and his boasting comes to an end. The rich man plans to add to his possessions, not knowing that he will not even keep possession of what he owns. Death leads away all people, and imprisons them in his realm until the judgement. He is also king over those who have not sinned, because of the judgement that Adam received for his sins.

15. However, the Lifegiver, the Slayer of Death, will come and bring an end to his power over the just and the wicked. The dead will arise with a mighty shout, and Death will be emptied and plundered for all his captives. All the children of Adam will be gathered for judgement, and each person will go to the place prepared for him. The righteous who arise will proceed to life, while the wicked who arise will be handed over to Death. The righteous who have kept the commandment will go [on] and not come to judgement on the day that they arise, just as David requested, *"Do not bring your servant to judgement!"* [30] Their Lord will not terrify them on that day.

16. Remember that the apostle also said, *"We will judge angels."* [31] And our Lord said to his disciples, *"You will sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of the house of Israel."* [32] Ezekiel said concerning righteous men that they would judge Oholah and Oholibah.[33] With respect to the righteous who are going to judge the wicked, he made known that they will not enter into judgement. As for what the apostle says (that we will judge angels), listen and I will explain [this] to you. The angels who will be judged by the apostles are priests who have broken the Law. As the prophet says, *"The lips of the priest shall guard knowledge, and [the people] will ask [to hear] the Law from his mouth, for he is the angel of the Lord of Hosts."* [34] When the angels (who are the priests, and from whose mouths [the people] ask

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[30] Psalm 143:2
[31] 1Corinthians 6:3
[32] Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30
[33] Ezekiel 23:45
[34] Malachi 2:7

[to hear] the Law) trespass the Law, they will be judged at the end by the apostles and the priests who have kept the Law.

17. *"The wicked will not rise at the judgement, nor will sinners [rise up] in the assembly of the righteous."*[35] Just as the righteous who have been perfected in good works will not enter into judgement to be judged, so too the wicked, whose sins have multiplied and for whom the measure of their offences is overflowing, will not be required to appear in judgement. When they arise, they will return to Sheol, as David said, *"The wicked and all the nations who forget God will return to Sheol."*[36] Isaiah also said, *"All the nations are like a drop in a bucket, or like the dipping of a balance, and the islands are thrown away like dust. All the nations are considered to be nothing by him; they are considered to be [suitable] for destruction and ruin."*[37] Therefore learn and be persuaded that all the nations who do not know God their maker are considered to be nothing by him and will not come to his judgement, but when they rise up will return to Sheol.

18. The rest of the whole world, those who are called 'sinners', will arise at the judgement and be accused. The judge will rebuke those in whom there are [only] minor faults. He will make known to them that they have done wrong, and give them the inheritance of life after judgement. Understand that our Lord made known in his Gospel that each person will receive his pay according to his work.[38] The one who received money showed a profit. The one whose mina and talent increased tenfold received eternal life, lacking nothing. The one whose mina and talent produced five portions received half of ten. One was given authority over ten portions, another over five. Understand and see that the profit from five was less than the profit from ten, and the workers who demanded payment gained more than those who received [it] in silence. Those who worked the whole day received [their] pay confi-

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[35] Psalm 1:5
[36] Psalm 9:17
[37] Isaiah 40:15,17
[38] Cf. Luke 19:11-27; Matthew 25:14-30

dently, and they make requests, trusting that more will be given to them. But those who worked for one hour receive [their pay] in silence, knowing that it is through grace that they have been shown mercy and live. Those sinners who multiply their sins will be condemned in the place of judgement and will go to torment. From that time forward, judgement will rule [over them].

19. Listen, furthermore, to the apostle, who said, *"Each person will receive his wage according to his work."* [39] The one who worked a little will receive according to his labour, but the one who greatly exerted [himself] will be rewarded according to his exertion. Job also said, *"Far be it from God to do wrong, and far be it from him to commit sin. For he rewards a person according to his actions, and he treats a man according to his conduct."* [40] Furthermore, the apostle said, *"One star exceeds [another] star in brightness; so it is also with the resurrection of the dead."* [41] Know, then, that when people enter into life, [one] reward will exceed [another] reward, [one] glory will exceed [another] glory, and [one] wage will exceed [other] wages. One condition is more elevated than another, and one light is more attractive than [another] light in appearance. The sun is greater than the moon, and the moon is greater than the stars that are with it. Observe that the moon and the stars are under the power of the sun, and their light is swallowed up in the brightness of the sun. But the sun has no power when the moon and stars are shining, so that it might not abolish the night which was separated from the day. When the sun was created, it was called a 'light'. Observe that the sun and the moon and the stars were all called 'lights', but one light exceeds another light. The sun conceals the light of the moon, the moon darkens the light of the stars, and the light of one star exceeds that of [another] star.

20. Learn also from [examples] in this world, from those who struggle with toil and the hired men who work with their fellow-

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[39] 1Corinthians 3:8
[40] Job 34:10-11
[41] 1Corinthians 15:41-42

men. There are some who hire their workers so that they receive payment for their labour with day-wages. Others are hired for a month, and they keep track of and receive their pay at the appointed time. The pay of a day is distinguished from that of a month, and [the pay] of a year exceeds that of a month.

21. Learn also from the [example] of the authority which is in this world. There are some who please the king by their endeavours and who receive honour from those in authority. One receives a crown from the king in order to be governor in one of the provinces. Under the authority of another the king places towns, and his attire is more refined than those inferior to him. Some receive gifts and presents, and one honour is distinguished from another. To one, the king gives the honour of being steward over the whole treasury. Another, because of his inferior position, serves the king and is only in charge of daily food.

22. I also say that not all people [receive] equal punishment. The one who has done great evil will be greatly tormented, but the one who has been less wicked will be tormented less. Some will go into the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.[42] Others will be thrown into the fire, as they deserve, for it is not written that they will gnash their teeth or that there is darkness there. Some will be thrown to another place, a place where their worm will not die and their fire will not be extinguished. All of humanity will be astonished at them.[43] The gate will be closed in the faces of some, and the judge will say to them, *"I do not know you."* [44] Understand that just as the reward for good deeds is not the same for all people, so it is also with evil deeds. People will not [all] be judged in one manner, but each person will be rewarded according to their actions, for the judge is cloaked in justice and does not show favouritism.

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[42] Matthew 7:12
[43] Isaiah 66:24; Mark 9:48
[44] Matthew 25:12

23. Just as I have taught you about the world, how one honour exceeds another and how the kings and rulers of the world give to those beneath them, so also have I taught you how [besides] the good gifts which the kings give to those honoured by them there are also prisons and chains and shackles of various kinds. One man greatly offends the king and is put to death with no debate. Another offends but does not deserve to be killed; he is imprisoned until he is judged and reprimanded, and the king pardons his offence. Yet another, whom the king has held in [high] regard, is kept outside the prison in freedom, without chains or shackles. The one who is killed is distinguished from the one who is imprisoned, and the punishment of one exceeds that of another, accoring to the degree of his offence. But come to our Saviour, who said, *"There are many rooms in my father's house."* [45]

24. My friend,[46] people who lack understanding dispute what I am writing to you, and say, "In what place will the righteous receive a good reward? And in what place are there torments, where the wicked will receive punishment for their actions?" O person who thinks such things, I will ask you and you will tell me: why is Death called 'Death', and why is Sheol called 'Sheol'? For it is written that when Korah and his companions rebelled against Moses, *"the earth opened its mouth and they went down to Sheol alive."* [47] Thus it was the mouth of Sheol that was opened in the wilderness. Furthermore, David said, *"The impious will return to Sheol."* [48] We say that the impious will return to Sheol, by which Korah and his companions were swallowed. For God has the power, if he wishes, to give the inheritance of life in heaven, or, if it pleases him, in the earth. Our Lord Jesus said, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them."* [49] And to one of those crucified with him (the one who believed in him), he promised, *"You will be with me in the garden of*

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[45] John 14:2
[46] *B* has "my friends"
[47] Numbers 16:32-33
[48] Psalm 9:18
[49] Matthew 5:3

Eden." [50] And the apostle said, *"When the righteous are resurrected, they will fly upwards to meet our Saviour."* [51] But this is what we say: what our Saviour said to us is true, that *"heaven and earth will pass away."* [52] And the apostle said, *"Hope which is seen is not hope."* [53] Furthermore, the prophet said, *"The heavens will pass away like smoke, and the earth will wear out like a garment; the inhabitants of [the earth] will become like it."* [54] And concerning those who sleep, Job said, *"They will not be awakened until the heavens wear out, nor will they break forth from their sleep."* [55] Be persuaded from these verses that the earth, in which the children of Adam are sown, and the firmament, which is over [all] people (the firmament that was set in place as a division[56] between the upper heavens and the earth of these living creatures), will pass away and wear out and be destroyed. God will make a new [place] for the children of Adam, and they will inherit properties in the kingdom of heaven. If he gives them an inheritance on the earth, it will be called 'the kingdom of heaven'. And if [it is] in the heavens, this will be easy for him to do. It is the same with the kings of the earth: though each one of them lives in [one] place, every place to which his power extends is called his kingdom. The sun is a light fixed in the firmament; for every place to which its rays extend, its power is sufficient, on the sea or on dry land. Observe also how the rulers of the world enjoy banquets and luxuries. In every place and in every city where they go their banquets are with them, and in each place that pleases them they make a prison. In twelve hours the sun makes a circuit from the east to the west, and after it is finished its course, its light is hidden by the night, and the night is not troubled by its power. In the hours of the night,[57] the sun goes around on its swift path, and having gone [all the way]

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[50] Luke 23:43
[51] 1Thessalonians 4:17
[52] Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33
[53] Romans 8:24
[54] Isaiah 51:6
[55] Job 14:12
[56] A adds "and a veil"
[57] A has "the day"

around, begins [again] to travel in its customary way. From your youth to the completion of your old age, you do not know, O wise man, where the sun that is with you travels at night, or how it circles around to the beginning of its course. Is it necessary for you to investigate that which is hidden from you?

25. I have written these reminders for our brothers and our friends, members of the Church of God, so that when they reach them in various places they might read them, and also remember my insignificance in their prayers, and know that I too am a sinner and unworthy. But this is my faith that is written in these chapters; I have laid it out from the beginning and written it [down]. Faith is the foundation, and on faith [rest] the works that are proper to it. After faith [I wrote about] the two commandments of love. After love I wrote about fasting (its demonstration and its works). After fasting I wrote [about] prayer (its fruit and its works). After prayer I wrote about war and about the things that Daniel wrote concerning the kingdoms. After war I wrote an exhortation to the covenanters. After the covenanters, I wrote about repentance. After repentance, I wrote about the resurrection of the dead. After the resurrection of the dead, I wrote about humility. After humility I wrote about pastors (the teachers). After pastors, I wrote about circumcision, which the people of the Jews boast about. After circumcision, I wrote about the Passover and the fourteenth day. After the Passover, I wrote about the Sabbath, in which the Jews take pride. After the Sabbath, I wrote an argument in response to the dissension which is occurring in our days. After the argument, I wrote about foods that the Jews consider unclean. After foods, I wrote about the peoples who have entered in and become heirs in place of the previous people. After the peoples, I wrote and declared that there is a son of God. After the son of God, I wrote against the Jews, who despise virginity. After the defence of virginity, I again wrote against the Jews, who say, 'We have a covenant to be gathered together.' After this defence I wrote about gifts for the poor. After the poor, I wrote a demonstration on those who are persecuted. After the persecuted, I wrote, [here] at the end, about Death and the end times. I have written these twenty-two discourses following the twenty-two letters of the alphabet. I wrote the first ten in the six hundred and forty-eighth year of the kingdom of Alexander son of Philip the Macedonian, as it is written at their end. I have written

these last twelve in the six hundred and fifty-fifth year of the kingdom of the Greeks and the Romans (which is the kingdom of Alexander), and in the thirty-fifth year of the king of Persia.

26. I have written these things as I have understood them. If a person reads these discourses and finds words that do not agree with his thinking, he should not scoff at them, because what is written in these chapters is not the thinking of one person, nor [is it] for the persuasion of one reader, but it is the thinking of the whole Church, and [it is] for the persuasion of all the faithful. If [a person] reads and listens with an open mind, [this is] good. If not, I must say that I have written for those open to persuasion and not for scoffers. And if the reader finds that some words are spoken one way by us and one way by another sage, he should not be troubled by this, for each person speaks to [his] audience based on what he understands. And if what I have written does not agree with the words of other authors, I say that these sages have spoken well, but it seemed [good] to me that I should speak in this way. If a person speaks and demonstrates to me on any topic, I will receive [instruction] from him without contention. Everyone who reads the holy scriptures (the former and the latter, in both testaments), and reads with an open mind, will learn and teach. But if he argues about things that he does not understand, his mind will not receive instruction. If he finds sayings that are difficult for him and he does not understand their meaning, let him say, 'What is written is written well, but I have not attained knowledge.' And if, about these sayings that are hard for him [to understand], he questions discerning sages who teach doctrine, and if ten sages speak to him in ten ways about one saying, let him accept what pleases him. And if nothing pleases him, he should not mock the sages, for the word of God resembles a pearl: no matter how you turn it, it appears beautiful. And remember, O student, that David said, *"I have learned from all my teachers."* [58] And the apostle said, *"Read every writing that is in the Spirit of God. Test everything, hold on to what is good, and flee from every evil*

[58] Psalm 119:99

thing." [59] For even if a person's lifetime was as [long as] all the days of the world from Adam to the completion of time, and if he sat and meditated on the holy scriptures, he would not understand all the meaning of the depth of the words. No human is able to rise up to the wisdom of God, as I wrote in [my] tenth discourse. The words of all speakers[60] who do not take from the great treasury will be despised and condemned. The image of the King is accepted everywhere it goes, but if it is counterfeit, then it is rejected and not accepted.[61] If a person says, 'These discourses were spoken by so-and-so', let him learn that he has not been commanded to be indignant with the author. I, a man descended from Adam and fashioned by the hands of God, a disciple of the holy scriptures, have written these things in my insignificance. For our Lord said, *"All who ask will receive, whoever seeks will find, and the [the door] will be opened for whoever knocks."* [62] And the prophet said, *"I will pour out my Spirit on all people in the last days, and they will prophesy."* [63] Therefore, let whoever reads what I have written above read with an open mind and pray for me, a brother of the community, so that through the petition of the whole Church of God his sins might be forgiven. May the one who reads remember what is written: *"Whoever hears the word should share all good things with the one who has caused him to hear."* [64] It is also written, *"The sower and the reaper will rejoice together,"* [65] and *"Each person will receive his pay according to his labour."* [66] Furthermore, *"There is nothing which is hidden that will not be revealed to every person."* [67]

The demonstration on Death and the end times is completed.

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[59] 2Timothy 3:16; 1Thessalonians 5:21-22
[60] *B* has simply "of those"
[61] The reference is to coins.
[62] Matthew 7:8; Luke 11:10
[63] Joel 2:28
[64] Galatians 6:6
[65] John 4:36
[66] 1Corinthians 3:8
[67] Matthew 10:26

DEMONSTRATION 23: *ON THE GRAPE-CLUSTER*

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II. TRANSLATION

1. I am writing to expound to you, beloved friend, concerning the topics you requested of me,[1] concerning that blessing which is hidden in the cluster. It is because of the grapecluster[2] of blessing that the cluster is not given over to destruction. For in the days of Isaiah, the Lord of the cluster wanted to destroy it, but it was said in a [certain] passage that the cluster would not be destroyed because of the blessing that was in it.[3] Since you have asked me if the

[1] This indicates that there was further correspondence on the part of Aphrahat's friend, now lost.

[2] The phrase "grapecluster" translates ܥܢܒܐ , the same word used in the title. When the word "cluster" is used on its own, this translates ܟܘܪܣܐ .

[3] Isaiah 65:8

righteous and the just are found on the earth at all times, I will convince you that this blessing has continued on in every generation up to the present. I will also explain to you concerning the other topic you asked about: why are the righteous sometimes heard when they pray, but at other times God does not hear them. I will also write to you concerning the years of the previous generations, and the calculation of each generation up to the time when Jerusalem was destroyed and goodness was taken from it, and how the righteous were watchful over [this] blessing which continued on from them to the time when, through Jesus, its lineage passed over to the peoples. However, though investigation into words is good in order to learn and understand, what is better is to fear God,[4] the Giver of words, with a pure heart, He who justifies us, and who has written and set before us that through great labour and much fear, and by the narrow gate and the tight path,[5] we advance fearing God.

2. Above all, therefore my friend, we ought to fear the judgement of God, and the words and commandments of our Lifegiver, who said, *"Every idle word that people speak they will have to give an accounting for at the day of judgement."* [6] And again it is written, *"It is by your words that you will be justified, and by your words that you will be condemned."* [7] It is also written, *"A person's mouth brings them down,"*[8] and in another place it is written, *"The mouth of the fool makes them into a stumbling block."* [9] Remember the words of the teacher of the peoples, who said, *"All of us must stand before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each person can be rewarded in his body for what he has done beforehand, whether good or evil."* [10] Again he[11] said, *"With fear and trembling preserve*

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[4] *B* and C omit "God"
[5] Matthew 7:14
[6] Matthew 12:36
[7] Matthew 12:37
[8] Cf. Ecclesiastes 10:12
[9] Proverbs 18:7
[10] 2Corinthians 5:10
[11] A and C have "the prophet"

your lives." [12] He also added and warned us, *"It is very terrible to fall into the hands of the living God."* [13] The blessed apostles also preached, *"It is necessary to go through great difficulty in order to enter the kingdom of God."* [14] Again it says, *"The day of the Lord is terrible. Who can endure it?* [15] *His anger is wrathful and hot; he makes the earth desolate and wipes out its sinners."* [16]

3. It was because the first man gave his obedience to the serpent that he received as punishment the curse that he would become the nourishment of the serpent,[17] and the curse has been transmitted to all his offspring. For because he ate from the tree of knowledge, he was kept from the fruit of the tree of life, so that he might not eat from it and live forever.[18] We know through this that because the man transgressed the commandment through the seduction of the Evil One, and before he had received the dignity of being like his Creator, and because of the discernment of knowledge that he received, there was a barrier between him and the tree of life. Because of the deception of the Evil One he was kept from its fruits. The tree was fenced in, by the command of the Great One, with a terrible spear and with a flame which went to and fro.[19] Because he perceived and knew, the man was able to go up to this tree, but in his weakness he was not able to get across the barrier. For this reason, this tree of life in its sweetness is not held back from those in need, that they might eat from it and be refreshed. It extends its boughs and drops its branches and stretches out its shoots over the barrier, and drops its fruits in kindness beyond the boundary which surrounds and guards it. And [for] people who have previously

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[12] Philippians 2:12
[13] Hebrews 10:31
[14] Acts 14:22
[15] Joel 2:11
[16] Isaiah 13:9
[17] C omits "that he would become the nourishment of the serpent"
[18] Genesis 3:22
[19] Genesis 3:23

taken hold of disturbing[20] and damaging knowledge through many torments,[21] it is by means of [this] remedy that the promise of the curse has been taken from them. When the Adversary perceived [this] he was a little confused in his mind. His strategies ceased and he became angry with the fruit and those who ate it. They have received in their bodies the abolition of the curse, and true wisdom has defeated the deception of the Evil One. Those who eat the fruit are kept safe, like the grapecluster inside the cluster, and because of the blessing the whole cluster is kept safe until the time set by the Most High is fulfilled. And if the decision against the rest of the cluster is delayed, it is because they do not want to repent through the strength of the blessing, so as to ripen and become sweet (as compared with the bitterness which they have received), and to become partakers of the sweetness of the fruit. The planting [of such penitents] is cultivated by the wisdom of the cultivator; for a long time they have been deprived the advantage and the recognition of the gift of [this] remedy. At the opening of the gate which proclaims peace, and through the rising of the light of the intellect, and through the fruitfulness of the light-giving olive tree, the gloom which [hangs over] the minds of many vanishes. In the olive tree is the sign of the mystery of life,[22] and through it the annointed ones are perfected: priests, kings, and prophets.[23] It gives light to those in darkness, fattens up those who are feeble, and brings the hidden mystery to those who repent. For those who crowd together and draw near, it drops a taste of itself to their secret ears; they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and they represent its images in the perceptions of their meditations. They endeavour without ceasing to proceed to what is before them, and strive to go forward, forgetting what is behind them.[24] They are able to attain that secret vision which they received when they tasted, which represents the melodies to them, so that they might escape from

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[20] A and C have "rebellious"

[21] A: "for a very long time" instead of "through many torments"

[22] A: "the mysteries of life"; C: "the sign of life"

[23] A: "kings, priests, and prophets"

[24] Philippians 3:13

the Evil One. Now they have become the yeast of the righteous in this world,[25] so that room for repentance might be given through them. It is also through them that sinners are forgiven on the earth, so that they might receive the promise and so that the sun of goodness might rise on them. And because of the patience of the Blessed One, the weeds are kept with the wheat.[26] For if the lord of the seed wants to order that the weeds be uprooted before they have finished growing, harm may befall the wheat when the weeds are separated from them. And the rain which makes the good seed grow[27] also makes the weeds spring up, the seed of the Evil One. The Blessed One has done this in his wisdom so that the trickery of the children of the Evil One might cease, those who set up two origins, [one] of good and [one] of evil. For if the rain which causes the wheat to grow weakened the weeds, it would be clear that there are two essences at work in creation. But the growth of the one as well as the other luxuriates in the rain, wind, and sun, and the creatures testify that there is one Creator: his creatures conduct themselves according to his command. For there are more good people in the world than evil,[28] and it is because of the good that the wrath that is poured out is kept from the evil.[29] When a breach is made in the fence that surrounds the evil ones and there is no one among the good who can stand in the breach, a portion of the evil ones spills through the breach and excites the wrath of the Most High, and because of the wrath which is against the evil ones, the chosen are entwined in the fumes. And when the sword is given the command to destroy, it slays sinners and the righteous, because the righteous have not hurried to stand in the breach in the fence, as the prophet said while proclaiming, *"I searched for a man who would repair the fence and stand in the breach on behalf of the land, so that I might not destroy it, but I did not find [him]."* [30]

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[25] C: "they have become righteous, the yeast of this world"
[26] Matthew 13:24-30
[27] Matthew 5:45
[28] *B*: "testify that there is one Creator in the world over the evil ones"
[29] Matthew 24:22; Mark 13:20
[30] Ezekiel 22:30

4. This has already been shown in the righteous of previous generations. The ten generations of the house of Adam were guarded, through the lifetime of Methuselah. But at the moment of his death, the flood came, and the world was consumed and destroyed by the wrath [of God]. And Noah was protected from the water of the deluge so that the world might be renewed again from him. After the flood, ten generations were guarded, beginning with the lifetime of Noah, the man of rest.[31] When the time was fulfilled and [Noah] died, Abraham left the Chaldean city of Ur,[32] and with great patience the Most High showed mercy to the Canaanites, since while the measure of his love was not completed he did not want to destroy them. He brought the seed of Abraham to Egypt, and promised domination to his cherished offspring, so that the transgressions of the Amorites would be brought to completion,[33] and so that his wonders might be displayed in those who subjected them. When he brought them out with great might he showed them his wonders. In the wilderness he nourished them with the food of his holy ones, he satisfied them with the bread of angels,[34] and he made a spring flow for them in a region where there is no water. When they exasperated his spirit and made him angry, Moses stood in the gap for his people.[35] And in the lifetime of Aaron, the high priest, propitiator, and offerer of incense [to appease God's] wrath, their enemies did not rule over them. But after Aaron's death on Mount Hor, the Canaanite king of Gadar, who lived in the south, attacked them.[36] In the days of Moses [God] did not fail to provide for them, but after his death on Mount Nebo, the manna was kept from them. When his people came out from Egypt, God took them through the terrible sea, and when Pharoah the oppressor was submerged, Miriam took a tambourine in her

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[31] This title for Noah is based on the similarity between his name (ܢܘܚ) and the word for "rest" (ܢܝܚܐ).

[32] Genesis 12:31

[33] Genesis 15:13-16

[34] Psalm 78:25

[35] Psalm 106:23

[36] Numbers 20:22-29; 21:1

hand and praised the Glorious One who submerged them.[37] But when Miriam died, there was no more water for the people to drink.[38] In the days of Hezekiah the king, they were delivered from two kings of Assyria, but after the death of [that] righteous man, his sons were led away as hostages to the king of Babylon.[39] And Josiah the righteous king purified the land of Israel from uncleanness, and he died before the [time of] evil. After his death, the oppressors of Israel multiplied, and the kings [who were] their adversaries uprooted them from their land.

5. At the moment when the measure of sinners overflows, the prayer of the righteous is no longer heard. For the Holy One said to Jeremiah, *"At this time, even if Moses and Samuel stood before me, my soul does not take pleasure in this people. I am sending them away from me and they will depart. If they say to you, 'Where are we going?', say to them, 'To destruction and captivity, to famine and pestilence,' [which are] the four plagues that I will send to them."* [40] God also said to Ezekiel, *"If I send destruction to the land and say, 'Let destruction or wild animals pass through the land,' and if Noah, Job, and Daniel were in this land, by my life, says the Lord of lords, they would save neither their sons nor their daughters, but through their righteousness they would save themselves, and land would be in ruin."* [41] The reason for the sadness which overwhelmed the prophet when he prayed but was not heard is intelligible to us. The Lord replied with the example of these three righteous [men] because a thought came to the prophet's heart: 'Why were Noah and Job and Daniel heard, each one in his generation, but my prayer [God] does not hear? Noah was heard, and the members of his household were saved together with him from the wrath of the deluge. Job prayed for his friends, and the Lord acted on his behalf and they were not put to shame. A mystery was revealed to Daniel in his prayer, and his friends were saved from the wrath of the

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[37] Exodus 15:20
[38] Numbers 20:1
[39] 2Kings 20:18
[40] Jeremiah 15:1-3
[41] See Ezekiel 14:12-20

king. Even the sages of Babylon, who were evil, were saved and lived through the prayer of Daniel.' As the prophet was thinking these things, the Blessed One replied to him in his customary kindness, *"I heard these three righteous men, each one in his generation. If they stood before me at this time, not only would I not hear them on behalf of the wicked, but also neither son nor daughter would be saved,*[42] *but only they would save themselves through their righteousness, and the land would be in ruin."* [43] Then the prophet was convinced by the reply of his Lord.

6. A similar thought also came to the prophet Jeremiah, who said, 'Why were Moses and Samuel heard, each one of them in his generation, but my prayer the Lord covers up and does not hear? For Moses stood in the gap for his people many times,[44] and they were not wiped out because of their sins. And Samuel made atonement for all Israel because they asked for a king and rejected [the Lord's] rule.' [45] Again, the Blessed One persuaded the prophet Jeremiah with great patience: *"Even if Moses and Samuel stood before me at this time, I would not listen to them."* [46]

7. In their time, these righteous ones, men of might, were sometimes heard when they prayed, but at other times they prayed and were not answered. It was through the acceptable prayer of Moses, the great prophet of all Israel, that his people were saved from wrath many times, and his prayer was sufficient for all Israel. But at another time when he prayed, his prayer on behalf of himself was not sufficient. For he prayed with groaning and made supplication in order to cross over and see the promised land, but his Lord said to him, *"Enough! Do not speak this word before me any more, for I am not listening to you. You rebelled against the word of my mouth and did not recog-*

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[42] A omits "but also neither… be saved"; C: "but also not even daughters would be saved"

[43] See Ezekiel 14:12-20

[44] Psalm 106:23

[45] 1Samuel 8:7

[46] Jeremiah 15:1

nize my holiness at the waters of contention."[47] O amazing mystery, that the righteous were not heard, since by not being heard they were being chastized before the judgement, so that they would not be blamed on the day of retribution. Thus Moses was chastized because he rebelled. His prayer was not heard, and he did not enter the promised land.

8. I speak with the utmost confidence, my brothers, that at all times, from the beginning and forever, the righteous and the just are found on the earth, as it is written: *"A righteous person shall not be absent from before the eyes of the Lord,*[48] *and the world shall not lack the just."*[49] For this reason our Saviour testifies, *"I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."* [50] It was because he wanted sinners to be justified that Christ came. There is no need for the healthy to take medicine, since they are not sick.[51] Those who are full do not become hungry, nor do those who have taken drink and have been refreshed become thirsty. For he cried out, *"Let anyone who thirsts come and drink."* [52] And the prophet cried out, *"O you who thirst! Come to the water and take for yourselves milk and wine without money or payment,"* [53] the wine which gives joy and the milk which causes growth. The apostle said concerning this, *"I have given you milk to drink, as infants in Christ."* [54]

9. Great is this mystery, which the prophet proclaimed beforehand! For he said, *"Anyone who thirsts, let him come to the water."* And the one who fulfilled the prophets said, *"Anyone who thirsts, let him come and drink."* The prophet referred to the spring, and he who provides water called [people] to drink. And the prophet pro-

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[47] Numbers 27:14; Deuteronomy 32:51
[48] C omits "of the Lord"
[49] See perhaps Proverbs 2:21
[50] Luke 5:32
[51] Matthew 9:12; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31
[52] John 7:37
[53] Isaiah 55:1
[54] 1Corinthians 3:1-2

claimed, *"Draw near and drink wine and milk without payment,"* from the one whose eyes are darker than wine and whose teeth are more white than milk.[55] [He is] not like the false prophets, who bite with their teeth yet proclaim peace. They proclaim war against anyone who does not throw [food] into their mouths. Nor do the wicked priests or the prophets of falsehood resemble [him], those who teach for pay and practice divination for money.[56] They have consumed the sin of the people, and they throw themselves on their wickedness. The priest has become like the people.[57] Since the priest has not accused the people of wrongdoing, he has acted wrongly like the people. But when the word came to the one who fulfilled it, he proclaimed to his apostles, *"Freely you have received, freely give."* [58] And the teacher of the peoples built on this: *"I have proclaimed to you the Gospel of Christ*[59] *free of charge."* [60] He also said, *"I want to give you the Gospel without expense."* [61]

10. Concerning what I have written, that the righteous and just can always be found on the earth, there can be no doubt. For it is because of the righteous that the Blessed One makes his sun rise on [both] the evil and the good.[62] You make your rain come down so that the wicked will be provided for. The righteous and the just are the salt of the earth, as our Saviour said to his blessed apostles, *"You are the salt of the earth."* [63] But if the salt loses its taste, the world quickly decays and becomes corrupt. As the soul is to the body, so the righteous are carriers of the world: when the soul departs, the body falls and its structure disintegrates. As the eyes are to the body, so the righteous are to the world: if the body is blinded, it

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[55] Genesis 49:12
[56] Micah 3:11
[57] See Hosea 4:8-9
[58] Matthew 10:8
[59] A and C have: "the Gospel of God"
[60] 2Corinthians 11:7
[61] 1Corinthians 9:18
[62] A and C omit "and the good"
[63] Matthew 5:13

becomes idle, and its beauty is taken away. It begins to stumble both at midday and at night, and it cannot direct its feet to walk. The righteous are the medicine of life in this world. If they were not in the world, the world would be dissolved and destroyed by wrath. The world flourishes when the righteous are within it, like a garden with a spring of water.[64] If the spring fails, the fruit of the garden dry up, and there is no profit[65] or refreshment for the soul, and its vines are uprooted and burned in the fire.[66] If vines which please the gardener are found, they will be cultivated again, and will produce a harvest. The world is allowed [to continue], held by the prayer of the righteous, as dough [exists] through the power of yeast. The righteous are the guides of this world, as a boat is guided by the wisdom of its sailors. The boat encounters fierce waves and staggers to and fro with violent motions, but the wise navigators stand diligently and lead the boat to a calm place.[67] If there are no wise navigators for the boat, it cannot reach the harbour; the boat sinks and loses its merchandise. If there are none who are just, the wicked perish, and if there are no righteous, the unbelievers are not provided for.[68]

11. If you the listener should ask me, 'If the righteous and the just are on the earth, why, at the time of evil and tribulation, is no prayer heard?', let the listener understand, without dispute, what I have written above: at various times the prayer of Moses, the great prophet, the man who led all Israel, made atonement for all his people, but at another time he was not heard [when he prayed] on behalf of himself. This is even more clear in the case of Jesus, the great Saviour and Son of God. It was because of the hearing of his acceptable prayer that God[69] was reconciled with his creation, as

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[64] Psalm 1:3

[65] C: "If it fails, there is no profit…"

[66] John 15:6

[67] A: "but the wise stand diligently and the navigators lead the boat to the place of life"

[68] A and C: "the unbelievers do not tremble"

[69] C adds "the Father"

the apostle said, *"He reconciled us with his father."* [70] At the moment when his hour had come, he prayed and made petition and supplication, though he was without need, and said, *"My father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me."* [71] But his prayer on behalf of himself was not heard. It was for our benefit that our Saviour was not heard. It was necessary for him to die in order to give us assurance that he died like us but [then] killed death and rose [again], and has caused us to rise and has promised that we will live. For if he had been heard when he wanted to avoid death, being clothed in a body, who would have confirmed the resurrection for us? He has strengthened us through his death and made us rejoice through his resurrection. He feared death, and in this [we know] that in his wisdom he made [himself] like us so that we might be assisted, and so that he might clearly show all people the weakness of the body which he put on like us. For if he had not been born like us, the road to death would not have been his, and if [a part] of his Spirit of life was not in us, he could not give us the assurance of life, that we would rise like him. First he died, through our death,[72] so that we might be encouraged through his death. Then he rose with great strength, without weakness, when he conquered death and ascended from its region. We rejoice, for our death has been swallowed up by his life,[73] and we have received the assurance of life through his death. If Christ did not die in the body, which [he put on] from us, then he has no assurance to give to us, which we can confidently receive, that we will live [again] after death. But he has perfected all of these assurances in himself, and we have confidently received assurance from him that we will live [again] after death. We will not be distressed at having been born, since he was born like us. We will not be discouraged by our weaknesses, since he became weak like us. He became weary and hungry in order to teach us to fast.[74] He was overcome with sleep and suffered and

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[70] Romans 5:10
[71] Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42
[72] *B*: "We are dead, from his death"
[73] 1Corinthians 15:54
[74] *B* omits "in order to teach us to fast"

was tempted in the weak body, and can assist those who are tempted.[75]

12. Let your mind learn and understand and be persuaded that it was out of necessity that the prayer of these two great prophets and glorious shepherds was not heard when they prayed for themselves. For a covenant is not established unless the one who has written it dies. For through Moses a covenant was promised to the people of Israel, that [God] would give them the land of the Canaanites as an inheritance. And through Jesus a covenant was promised, that he would give the peoples the land of life. Moses died at the crossing of the Jordan, and the covenant which was promised to his people was established. And Jesus died in the land of our death and the covenant which he promised for the peoples was established, since he promised to give them the land of life. The Lord of Moses showed him the promised land before Israel had inherited it. Jesus, our Saviour, rose from the house of the dead and went to prepare for us the land that he promised. As he said to his apostles, *"I am going away to prepare a place for you, and then I will come [back] and lead you, so that you might also be at the place where I am."* [76] And he affirmed for us the promise that we would be with him. He gave a revelation to his apostles in advance, when they asked for the sign of his coming. [This was] when he took [up the mountain] three of his disciples, Simon, James, and John: Simon the rock, the foundation of the Church, and James and John, the firm pillars of the Church. He showed these three reliable witnesses a sign of his coming when his appearance was transformed to the likeness of his coming, when Moses and Elijah were with him.[77] He gave heart to the dead who were ready to live, like Moses, who appeared, and the living who remain at his coming will be confident that they will be transformed when they meet him to be like Elijah, who did not taste death and was [also] seen with him. For [God] made known to us that when it was appropriate for Moses, the

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[75] Hebrews 2:18
[76] John 14:2-3
[77] Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-10; Luke 9:28-36

great prophet, and Jesus, the beloved firstborn[78] son, to be heard, they were making atonement through their prayer for a multitude of people. And when at other times their requests were ignored, this was an example, so that those many people who pray and are not heard might be encouraged. When, through the example of these heroes, they understand that they prayed but were not heard, they will no longer be sad; they accept [it] in their minds and are persuaded, because of the pattern of Moses and our Saviour,[79] and the prophets and righteous ones of the past.

13. Now, therefore, be persuaded and understand that there are righteous people on the earth, and the world is preserved on account of the just. For the world stands firm through [God's] kindness, as the prophet said, *"The world is built up through mercy."* [80] This excellent promise is that the righteous will never be lacking from the earth, nor will they be deserted. For if the righteous were to be absent from the world, through the overflowing of the measure of the debts of the wicked, the world would be destroyed by wrath,[81] and mercy would be conquered by justice, the requirement of judgement. It is for this reason that the just are left on the earth, in a world of falsehood, so that because of them justice will not prevail and enter into the world, which continues in mercy, to require judgement in a place where there is no judgement. The just are hidden in this world, so that on account of them, [the world] is not destroyed through wrath, like the grapecluster hidden in the cluster. It is because of the grapecluster that the cluster is preserved for so long. It is in this way that we understand the word which the prophet preached and said to the people, *"If a grapecluster is found within a cluster, a man says to his friend, 'Do not destroy the cluster, for there is blessing in it.' And [the Lord] said, 'Thus I will do on behalf of my chosen ones. I will not destroy all of them, but will bring out a seed from Jacob and*

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[78] *B* omits "firstborn"
[79] A adds "the Master of Moses"
[80] Cf. Psalm 89:2
[81] A omits "by wrath"

from Judah, an heir to my holy mountain.'" [82] The cluster is the people Israel, and the blessing in the midst of it is Christ the King.

14. At the beginning, this grapecluster was guarded by Adam, the first firstborn. Even though he sinned, the seed of the righteous was guarded by him, and the blessing was guarded by Seth and all his descendants. When all people on earth had corrupted their way, the blessing was guarded by a man of peace, Noah, who was found to be righteous and innocent in a corrupt generation.[83] The blessing was guarded in an ark of wood, and all the ungodly were were destroyed by the wrath which was poured out when the grapecluster was plucked and taken from them. After Noah and his sons had come out of the ark, the blessing was guarded by Shem, the father of the righteous. For the Spirit made this clear through the mouth of the man of rest when he blessed his sons after the deluge, for he said, *"May God make Japheth increase, and may he live in the tents of Shem."* [84] And he cursed Canaan, the offspring of Ham, who mocked his father and was deprived of the blessing. This blessing travelled through ten generations, from Noah to Abraham. After the flood, Noah lived three hundred and fifty years,[85] and he gave birth to and multiplied sons and daughters in his days. When they reached Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans, it was there that God confused the languages of all the earth.[86] Noah remained in Ur of the Chaldeans, while settling and guarding the blessing of the righteous for two hundred and ninety-two[87] years after the flood.

15. Abraham was born in Ur of the Chaldeans in the eight-hundred and ninety-second year of the life of Noah, a long time after the languages had been confused. And when Noah was nine-hundred and fifty years old, he finished his time and died at a good

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[82] Isaiah 65:8-9
[83] Genesis 6:9,12; cf. Sirach 44:17
[84] Genesis 9:27
[85] Genesis 9:28
[86] Genesis 11:9
[87] C: "two hundred and ninety-five"

old age, in the fifty-eighth year of Abraham. Noah died in Ur of the Chaldeans. Then Abraham left Ur of the Chaldeans and went and lived in Harran for a short time. God took him from Harran to the land of Canaan the offspring of Ham, the cursed seed upon whom subjugation was decreed. When Abraham was one hundred years old, in the four hundred and ninety-second year of the life of Shem, the father of the righteous, Isaac was born. Shem lived for one hundred and twelve years after Isaac was born. Isaac fathered Jacob and Esau when he was sixty years old, and Shem lived for sixty-two years after Jacob and Esau were born. Abraham died at the age of seventy five, and Shem lived for thirty-seven years after the death of Abraham. Isaac was one hundred and thirty-seven years old when he blessed Jacob his son, in whom was hidden the blessing of the righteous. Jacob was seventy-seven years old when he fled to Haran, and he was eighty-four years old when he married Leah and Rachel. In the one hundred and twelfth year of the life of Isaac, Shem died, in the fifty-second year of the life of Jacob. When Jacob was ninety-seven years old, God said to him, *"Return to the land of your fathers, and I will do good to you and be with you."* [88] Jacob was ninety-seven years old when he left Harran, and Isaac his father was one hundred and fifty-seven. Isaac lived for twenty-three years after Jacob left Harran. Forty-three years after he had blessed [Jacob], and twenty-three years after he had left Harran, [Isaac] died at the age of one hundred and eighty. Jacob went down to Egypt twenty[89] years after the death of Isaac his father, twenty-two years after his son Joseph was sold to Egypt, and sixty-eight years after the death of Shem. Jacob was in Egypt for seventeen years, and died at the age of one hundred and forty-seven, fifty years after he had left Harran, and twenty-seven years after the death of Isaac his father. When Jacob died, Joseph was fifty-six years old. The blessing was preserved in Judah, the offspring of Jacob, before he went to Egypt. Judah fathered Perez, and this blessing was hidden in the loins of Perez when Jacob and Judah went down to Egypt. Perez fathered Hezron, and Hezron fathered Aram, and Aram fathered

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[88] Genesis 31:3

[89] A: "ten"

Aminidab, and Aminidab fathered Nahshon, the head of the children of Judah.

16. After Aminidab [the blessing] lived in Eliezar, the son of Aaron the priest, from whom was born Phineas. The blessing of the kingdom and the priesthood went forth from Aminidab: leadership and sovereignty [went forth] from Nahshon, and the priesthood [went forth] from the offspring of the sister of Nahshon, who gave birth to Phineas, who satisfied the wrath of God in his zeal. From Nahshon Shela was born, and Shela fathered Boaz. From Boaz the leadership of kings came forth, through Boaz and Ruth the Moabite. The reason that Boaz married Ruth the Moabite was so that Lot might share in the blessing of the righteous. From the offspring of Ruth was descended the family of the house of David, and from their seed Christ the King was born. And God did not reject the hospitality of Lot, the son of the brother of Abraham, who went with him from Harran. Because he took in strangers[90] like Abraham his uncle, God included him in the blessing of the righteous through Ruth the Moabite, whom Boaz took as a wife. God also remembered Lot through Naama the Ammonite, whom Solomon took as a wife and who gave birth to Reheboam the king. Solomon took many wives: seven hundred free women and three hundred concubines. It is not written that he had any seed from any of his one thousand wives, except Reheboam from Naama the Ammonite, who became his wife during the lifetime of David his father. For when Solomon rose to the throne, Reheboam was one year old. Solomon reigned for forty years, and when Solomon died, Reheboam [began to] rule at the age of forty-one.

17. Lot was included in the blessing of the righteous through Ruth the Moabite and Naama the Ammonite, the two tribes that had come from him. Boaz fathered Obed, Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David. This blessing was preserved through all the kings of the house of Judah, from David to Jehoiachin, eighteen kings [in all]. David sinned, but because of the blessing that

[90] Genesis 19:1-11

was hidden in him, his wickedness was pardoned. Solomon transgressed the Law and forsook his God, but because of the blessing which was hidden in him and in his seed, God said, *"I will make him great for all of his days."* [91] Reheboam multiplied offences, but because of the blessing that was in him, God said, *"I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him a lamp in Jerusalem on account of my servant David."* [92] Abijah son of Reheboam sinned, but because of the blessing which was in him Jereboam and his army were delivered into his hands. In Asa the blessing of the righteous intensified.[93] He served righteousness, and God heard his prayer and his enemies were delivered into his hands.[94] The blessing was preserved in Jehoshaphat: he did what was right before the Lord.[95] Jahoram sinned much, but because of the blessing he was preserved. He sinned but he was not eradicated like the house of Ahab (for he was connected by marriage to the house of Ahab, [after] Athalia daughter of Omri king of Israel had seduced him).[96] The grapecluster was preserved in Joash, son of Ahaziah, and he was not killed with his brothers when Athalia wiped out the royal offspring, after she saw that her son Ahaziah was killed by Jehu son of Yamshi.[97] Joash sinned and shed innocent blood.[98] He rejected the blessing of Jehoiada the priest and wiped out his seed after him,[99] but because of the blessing his seed was preserved. Amaziah arose and governed the kingdom, and he sinned with idols and worshipped other, foreign gods,[100] but because of the blessing his seed was preserved. Uzziah arose after him. He rebelled against the priesthood and did not listen to it, and the Holy One struck him

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[91] 1Kings 11:34
[92] 1Kings 11:36
[93] 1Kings 15:11-15; 2Chronicles 14:1-5
[94] 2Chronicles 14:8-14
[95] 2Chronicles 17
[96] 2Kings 8:17; 2Chronicles 21:5
[97] 2Kings 11:1-2
[98] 2Chronicles 22:9-11
[99] 2Chronicles 24:22
[100] 2Chronicles 25:14

with the plague of leprosy for all of his days.[101] Jotham rose to the kingship and sinned much, but because of the blessing his seed was saved. Ahaz rose to the kingship and sinned much. He worshipped dead gods and said, "You are my gods and my lords, and I worship you," but because of the blessing his seed was preserved. Hezekiah the righteous king arose over all of Judah in Jerusalem. He prayed and made supplication before his God, and his prayer was heard and it destroyed his enemies.[102] He served honourably the blessing of the righteous which was within him. He was sick and he prayed and was healed from his sickness.[103]

18. There are people, my friend,[104] who find fault with Hezekiah [and say], 'Why did he suffer in his sickness, so that he was dying, he who acted with such great righteousness before his God? And what profit came to him through this extension [of life] which was given to him, this extension in which he glorified himself with his riches before the messengers of the king of Bablyon, and did not praise the name of his God, who had healed him from his sickness?' It was for this reason that Hezekiah the righteous king suffered: he did not yet have a son, and in his loins was hidden the blessing of the righteous. Thus he said in his torment, 'The blessing which has travelled through all previous ages, from Adam to me, through forty-six generations, why will it not go forth from me, and [why] is the grapecluster taken away from me? Is the cluster given over to destruction?' When he had though these things and had prayed in sadness, Isaiah the prophet came to him and said, *"Thus says the Lord: 'Behold! I am adding to your years. You will live fifteen [more] years.'"*[105] And he added fifteen years to [his life]. Then, in the eighteenth[106] year of his rule, in the third year of his additional [years], he fathered Manasseh. He ruled twenty-nine years, fourteen

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[101] 2Kings 16:3-4; 2Chronicles 28:2-4
[102] 2Kings 19:15-19; 2Chronicles 32:20
[103] 2Kings 20:1-7; 2Chronicles 32:24
[104] A and C have "my friends"
[105] 2Kings 20:5-6
[106] *B*: "eighth"

at first and then fifteen, and the word that was written was fulfilled: *"The righteous extend their days, but the years of the wicked will be taken away."* [107] The years of the corrupt generation in the days of Noah were taken away, [as were those of] the sinful kingdom of the house of Ephraim, but he added to [the life of] Hezekiah and also to Job. He added fifteen years to [the life of] Hezekiah, and he doubled the years and the possessions and the children of Job. If anyone thinks that Job did not receive double in everything, let him be persuaded without controversy, for it is written thus: *"God multiplied the latter things of Job more than the former things, and seven sons and three daughters were born to him."* [108] When the time of the resurrection of the righteous comes to the world, he will receive his children in double: his seven sons and three daughters, the former ones and the latter ones. But while he was in this world, he received double of everything he owned. And the word which [says] that God also double his years is understood by us, as it is written, *"Job grew old, became full of days, and died. After his testing he lived one hundred and forty years."* [109] He had lived seventy years before his testing. The word of scripture was fulfilled on him: *"Job received double of everything he had,"* [110] his years and possessions in this world, and his sons and daughters in the world of the righteous. For the craftsman has power over his creation to add [to it] and to subtract [from it].

19. Manasseh was born, the wicked offspring of a righteous man, and he sinned much, more than all who had gone before him. He rose to the kingship at twelve years of age, and he ruled for fifty-five years.[111] But even though he multiplied his sins and worshipped idols, because of the blessing his seed was preserved, and he gave birth to Amon. Amon became king and walked in the ways of Manasseh,[112] but because of the blessing that was in him he

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[107] Proverbs 10:27
[108] Job 42:12-13
[109] Job 42:16
[110] Job 42:10
[111] 2Kings 21:1; 2Chronicles 33:1
[112] 2Kings 21:19-22; 2Chronicles 33:21-23

ruled the kingdom. A righteous man was born from him, Josiah, the remembrance of whom is blessed.[113] And he removed the defilement from the land of Israel in the days of his rule.[114] Because the sins of the people were urging them on, he died before the evil [came]. It did not come upon the people in his days, as Hulda, the prophetess, prophesied when he sent to her to ask about the matter and she sent [word] to him, *"Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'Because your heart is broken, and you grieved over the sins of the people when you heard the words of the Law, I will gather you to your fathers and you will not see the evil which is coming on this people.'"* [115] He was gathered [to his fathers] before the evil [came] when Pharoah Neco,[116] king of Egypt, killed him.[117] Jehoahaz his son rose to the kingship, but because the blessing was not in him, he did not prosper in the kingdom of the house of David. He ruled for three months, after which Pharoah Neco, king of Egypt, led him [away]. He died in Egypt and the remembrance of him was erased.[118] Jehoiakim began to rule over the kingdom, since the blessing of the righteous was hidden in him. In the third year of his rule, Nebudchadnezzar conquered him for tribute, and led away Daniel and his brothers as hostages.[119] [Jehoiakim] served Nebuchadnezzar for eight years, but because he sinned much and rebelled, Nebuchadnezzar killed him. They dragged him and threw him outside the gates of Jerusalem, and he was buried with the burial of an donkey.[120] His son Jehoiachin ruled after him. Because the blessing of the righteous was hidden in him he ruled for three months, the army of the Chaldeans came against him and led him [away], and they went [back] to Babylon.[121]

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[113] A conflation of Sirach 45:1; 46:11; 49:1

[114] 2Kings 22:1-2; 2Chronicles 34:1

[115] 2Kings 22:19-20

[116] Syr. ܦܪܥܘܢ ܣܓܝܪܐ . Literally: "the lame Pharoah", which was Neco's nickname.

[117] 2Kings 23:29

[118] 2Kings 23:30-34; 2Chronicles 36:1-4

[119] 2Kings 24:1-2; Daniel 1:1-7

[120] Jeremiah 22:19

[121] 2Kings 24:8-9; 2Chronicles 36:9-10

He was imprisoned for thirty-seven years in Babylon,[122] while the blessing of the righteous was hidden in him. The people were left in Jerusalem because of defilement, and Zedekiah arose as king over the remnant of the people. Jehoiachin fathered Shelatiel in Babylon. As long as the blessing was in Babylon, the Babylonians governed [their] kingdom in peace and tranquility. When Shelatiel was born in the land of Babylon, the blessing of the righteous was hidden in him. Shelatiel fathered Zerubbabel. Then, in the days of Zerubbabel, the captives returned from Babylon through Ezra the scribe, during the rule of Cyrus, the Persian. Zerubbabel was with the captives and became leader over them, as the prophet said, *"Zerubbabel, son of Shelatiel, leader of Judah, and Joshua son of Jehozadak, high priest."* [123] These are the two sons of opulence who were standing before the Lord of all the earth.[124]

20. When the blessing returned from Babylon to Jerusalem, the kingdom of the Babylonians ceased, and Cyrus the Persian began to rule. It was after sixty-three years that the blessing returned from Babylon to Jerusalem, from the time when Jehoiachin was taken captive to [the time when] the captives returned through Ezra. Zerubbabel fathered Abiud, Abiud fathered Eliakim, Eliakim fathered Azor, Azor fathered Zadok, Zadok fathered Akim, Akim fathered Eliud, Eliud fathered Eleazar, Eleazar fathered Matthan, Matthan fathered Jacob, Jacob fathered Joseph, and Joseph is called the father of Jesus Christ. Jesus was born from Mary, the virgin, from the seed of the house of David and from the Spirit of holiness, as it is written, *"Both Joseph and Mary his betrothed were from the house of David."* [125] And the apostle testifies, *"Jesus*[126] *Christ, from*

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[122] 2Kings 25:27; Jeremiah 52:31

[123] Haggai 1:1

[124] Zechariah 4:14

[125] Luke 2:4-5. Mary's Davidic ancestry is not at all clear in the Greek text. The NRSV has: "Joseph also went… to Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged…"

[126] A and C: "Our Lord Jesus"

Mary, was from the seed of the house of David through the Spirit of holiness." [127] Joseph was called the father of Jesus (even though he was not born from his seed), but the name of fatherhood was transmitted from Adam to Joseph, through sixty-three generations. But the name of fatherhood was lifted from Joseph and placed on Christ. From Joseph he received the name of fatherhood, from John [he received] the name of the priesthood, and from Mary he put on a body and received the name of birth. After sixty-three weeks [of years] Christ was born and was killed.[128] The grapecluster of blessing was taken from the cluster, and the whole cluster was given over to destruction. The vineyard was ravaged for lack of a gardener, and it produced wild grapes and bitter fruits;[129] the vine was ravaged and the stem uprooted.

21. Now, receive the list of these sixty-three generations from Adam up to when Christ was born: Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Perez, Hezron, Aram, Aminadab, Nahshon, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David, Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijah, Asaph, Jehosaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Jehoash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Salathiel, Zerubbabel, Abiud, Eliakim, Azor, Zadok, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, Jacob, Joseph, and Jesus, the son of God, who was born from Mary, the virgin. And Joseph was called his father.

22. I will now begin a demonstration for you of the calculation of years from Adam to [Jesus], this list which I have written down and shown you. God created and fathered Adam. When Adam was one hundred and thirty years old, he fathered Seth. After he fathered Seth, Adam lived for eight hundred years. The total of his years was

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[127] Romans 1:3-4. Bruns (1990, 187, n. 13) claims that the quotation comes from the pseudepigraphical 3Corinthians (3:10).

[128] *B* omits "and was killed"

[129] Isaiah 5:2

nine hundred and thirty. Adam lived until the thirty-first year of the the lifetime of Lamech,[130] who fathered Noah, and he died in the ninth generation.

23. When Seth had lived one hundred and five years, he fathered Enosh. After he fathered Enosh, Seth lived for eight hundred and seven years. The total of his years was nine hundred and twelve, one hundred and eighty [years] into the lifetime of Lamech, and two years before the birth of Noah. [Seth] died in the eighth generation.

24. Enosh fathered Cainan at the age of ninety. After he fathered Cainan Enosh lived eight hundred and fifteen years. The total of his years was nine hundred and five years. Enosh lived until the seventy-ninth year of the lifetime of Noah, five hundred and twenty-one years before the flood, and died in the eighth generation.

25. Cainan fathered Mahalaleel at the age of seventy. After he fathered Mahalaleel, Cainan lived eight hundred and forty years. The total of his years was nine hundred and ten years. Cainan lived until the one hundred and seventy-ninth year of the lifetime of Noah, four hundred and twenty-one years before the flood, and he died in the seventh generation.

26. Mahalaleel fathered Jared at the age of sixty-five. After he fathered Jared, Mahalaleel lived eight hundred and thirty years. The total of his years was eight hundred and ninety-five. Mahalaleel lived until the two hundred and fourteenth year of the lifetime of Noah, three hundred and eighty-six years before the flood, and he died in the sixth generation.

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[130] The genealogy which follows (which matches the biblical account in Genesis 5:3-31) establishes the birth of Lamech in the 874th year of Adam's life. If, as Aphrahat claims, Adam lived to the 31st year of Lamech's life, this would mean that he was 905 years old at death, which contradicts the 930 given by both Aphrahat and Genesis.

27. Jared fathered Enoch at the age of one hundred and sixty-two. After he fathered Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years. The total of his years was nine hundred and sixty-two. Jared lived until the three hundred and seventy-eighth year of the lifetime of Noah, two hundred and twenty-two years before the flood, and he died in the fifth generation.

28. Enoch fathered Methuselah when he was sixty-five years old. After he fathered Methuselah, Enoch pleased God for three hundred years. The total of his years was three hundred and sixty-five. In the three hundredth year of Methuselah his son, and in the one hundred and thirteenth year of the lifetime of Lamech, sixty-nine years before the birth of Noah, and six hundred and sixty-nine years before the flood, God took him away to the place of life, in the third generation.

29. Methuselah fathered Lamech when he was one hundred and eighty-seven years old. After he fathered Lamech, Methuselah lived seven hundred and eighty-two years. The total of his years was nine hundred and sixty-nine. Methuselah lived until the six hundredth year of the lifetime of Noah, and after he died, Noah went into the ark. The flood came at the moment the righteous man died. He saw Adam for one hundred and fifty-one years and Shem for ninety-seven years.[131] He died in the third generation, and the world was destroyed by wrath.

30. Lamech fathered Noah when he was one hundred and eighty-two years old. After he fathered Noah, Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years. The total of his years was seven hundred and

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[131] Once again the figures do not add up. If Methuselah 'saw' Adam for only 151 years, then Adam died before the birth of Lamech, which contradicts the statement in section 23. The statement that Methuselah 'saw' Shem for 97 years is roughly compatible with the biblical account, since the latter merely says that Noah fathered his three sons after he was 500 years old. Since Lamech died in the 600th year of Noah (the year of the flood), Aphrahat pegs the birth of Lamech to Noah's 503rd year.

seventy-seven. Lamech lived until the five hundred and ninety-sixth year of the lifetime of Noah his son, four years before the flood. His father Methuselah lived for four years after [his death], and then the flood came. Lamech saw Adam for sixty-eight years, and he died four years before the flood, in the second generation.

31. Noah was born eighty-six years after the death of Adam, the first firstborn, who had fathered Seth. He was born nine years before the death of Seth, who had fathered Enosh. Enosh, who fathered Cainan, died in the seventy-ninth year of the lifetime of Noah. Cainan, who fathered Mahalaleel, died in the one hundred and seventy-ninth year of the lifetime of Noah. Mahalaleel, who fathered Jared, died in the two hundred and fourteenth year of the lifetime of Noah. Jared, who fathered Enoch, died in the three hundred and seventy-eighth year of the lifetime of Noah. Sixty-nine years before the birth of Noah, Enoch was taken and his death was not observed, six hundred and sixty-nine years before the flood. In the six hundredth year of the lifetime of Noah, Methuselah died, and after this the flood came. In the five hundred and ninety-sixth year of the lifetime of Noah, Lamech the father of Noah died, four years before Methuselah his father. Noah was six hundred years old when he went into the ark, in the year that Methuselah died. And Noah and his sons were in the ark from the seventeenth [day] of the second month until the twenty-seventh [day] of second month in the following year: twelve months and ten days. Then Noah and his sons went out of the ark. After the flood Noah lived three hundred and fifty years, and he died in the fifty-eighth year of the lifetime of Abraham. He was born in the seventy-ninth year of the lifetime of Enosh, and he died in the fifty-eighth year of the lifetime of Abraham. He saw eighteen generations, both before and after [the flood].

32. When Shem was one hundred years old, he fathered Arphakshar, two years after the deluge, and after he fathered Arphakshar Shem lived five hundred years. The total of his years was six hundred, and he died in the one hundred and twelfth year of the lifetime of Isaac, [which was] the seventy-second year of the lifetime of Jacob. Shem was born ninety-eight years before the flood. He was born in the years of Methuselah, and he died in the years of Jacob. He saw sixteen generations, before and after [the flood].

33. Arphakshar fathered Shelach when he was thirty-five years old. After he fathered Shelach he lived four hundred and three[132] years. The total of his years was four hundred and thirty-eight.[133] He died in the one hundred and forty-seventh year of the lifetime of Abraham, and in the forty-seventh year of the lifetime of Isaac, in the tenth generation.

34. Shelach fathered Eber when he was thirty years old. After he fathered Eber, Shelach lived four hundred and three years. The total of his years was four hundred and thirty-three years, and he died in the sixty-second year of the lifetime of Jacob, in the one hundred and twenty-second year of the lifetime of Isaac, in the tenth generation.

35. Eber fathered Peleg when he was thirty-four years old. After he fathered Peleg, Eber lived four hundred and thirty years. The total of his years was four hundred and sixty-four,[134] and he died in the one hundred and twenty-fifth year of the lifetime of Jacob, five years after Isaac died, in the tenth generation.

36. Peleg fathered Aru when he was thirty years old. After he fathered Aru, Peleg lived two hundred and nine years. The total of his years was two hundred and thirty-nine, and he died in the forty-eighth year of the lifetime of Abraham, in the ninth generation.

37. Aru fathered Serug when he was thirty-two years old. After he fathered Serug, Aru lived two hundred and seven years. The total of his years was two hundred and thirty-nine years, and he died in the seventy eighth year of the lifetime of Abraham, three years after he left Harran, in the fifth generation.

38. Serug fathered Nahor when he was thirty years old. After he fathered Nahor, Serug lived two hundred years. The total of his

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132 *B*: "four hundred and thirty"
133 *B*: "four hundred and sixty-five"
134 *B*: "four hundred and sixty-two"

years was two hundred and thirty years, and he died in the one hundred and first year of the lifetime of Abraham, in the first year after Isaac was born, in the fifth generation.

39. Nahor fathered Terah when he was twenty-nine years old. After he fathered Terah, Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years. The total of his years was one hundred and forty-eight years, and he died in the forty-ninth year of the lifetime of Abraham, the nine hundred and thirty-ninth year of the lifetime of Noah, in the three hundred and thirty-ninth year after the deluge. Noah lived for eleven years after Nahor died, and he died in the third generation.

40. Terah fathered Abraham when he was seventy years old. After he fathered Abraham, Terah lived one hundred and thirty-five years. The total of his years was two hundred and five, and he died in the one hundred and thirty-fifth year of the lifetime of Abraham, in the thirty-fifth year of the lifetime of Isaac, five years before Isaac took Rebecca, daughter of Bethuel, as his wife. He died in the third generation.

41. Abraham was one hundred years old when he fathered Isaac. After he fathered Isaac, Abraham lived seventy-five years. The total of his years was one hundred and seventy-five, and he died in the fifteenth year of the lifetime of Jacob. He died in the third generation.

42. Isaac was sixty years old when he fathered Jacob. After he fathered Jacob, Isaac lived one hundred and twenty years. The total of his years was one hundred and eighty years, and he died in the one hundred and twentieth year of the lifetime of Jacob, twenty-three years after Jacob had left from Harran, eleven years after Joseph was sold to Egypt, ten years before Jacob went down to Egypt. He died in the fourth generation.

43. Jacob was seventy-seven years old when Isaac his father blessed him, and eighty-four years old when he took Leah and Rachel, the daughters of Laban, as his wives. From Leah were born to him Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; from Rachel Joseph and Benjamin; from Bilhah, the servant of Rachel, Gad and Asher; and from Zilpah, the servant of Leah, Dan and

Naphtali. These are the twelve sons of Jacob. Jacob died when he was one hundred and forty-seven years old, seventeen years after he went down to Egypt. He died in the fourth generation.

44. From Adam up until Noah entered the ark there were one thousand, six hundred and fifty-one years, as it is written in the Book of Generations. And from when Noah came out of the ark up to time when God established a covenant with Abraham there were three hundred and eighty-seven years, as it is written in the Book of Generations. From the promise to Abraham to when Jacob went to Egypt were two hundred and five years, and the Israelites were in Egypt for two hundred and twenty-five years. From the promise to Abraham to when the people came out from Egypt were four hundred and thirty years, as Paul, the apostle, testified: *"The Law which came four hundred and thirty years after the covenant (which was ratified in a previous time by God) was unable to remove it and bring an end to the promise."* [135] From Adam to the flood there were one thousand six hundred and fifty one years. From the deluge to when the people came out of Egypt there were eight hundred and seven years.

45. Moses was the leader of the people in the desert for forty years, and Joshua son of Nun was the leader of the people for twenty-five years. Judah and Othniel son of Kenaz were leaders of the people for forty-eight years. Eglon, king of Moab, subjected the people for eighteen years. Ehud was leader of the people for eighty years. Jabin subjected Israel for twenty years. Deborah and Barak were leaders of the people for forty years. The Midianites subjected Israel for seven years. Gideon was the leader of the people for forty years. Abimelech, son of Gideon, was the leader of the people for sixty years. Tula, son of Pua, was the leader of the people for twenty-three years. Jaer was the leader of the people for twenty-two years. The Philistines and the Ammonites subjected Israel for eighteen years. Jephthah was leader of the people for six years. Ibzan was leader of the people for seven years. Elon was leader of the

[135] Galatians 3:17

people for ten years. Abdon was leader of the people for eight years. The Philistines subjected Israel for forty years. Samson was the leader of the people for twenty years. Eli was the leader of the people for forty years. After Eli the ark was in the house of Abinidab, which was in Gibeah, for twenty years. Samuel was leader of the people for thirty years. Saul was leader of the people for forty years. The years of [all] these leaders [totalled] six hundred and fifty-five. But in the book of Kings it is written, *There were four hundred and eighty years from the departure of the Israelites from the land of Egypt to the fourth year of the rule of Solomon, when he began to build the house of God.* [136] This is how [that book] calculates the years, but the other earlier calculation does not agree [with it].

46. David ruled for forty years. Solomon ruled for forty years. Reheboam ruled for seventeen years. Abijah ruled for three years. Asa ruled for forty-one years. Jehosaphat ruled for twenty-five years. Joram ruled for eight years. Ahaziah ruled for one year. Athaliah ruled for six years. Joash ruled for forty years. Amaziah ruled for twenty-three years. Uzziah ruled for fifty-two years. Jotham ruled for sixteen years. Ahaz ruled for sixteen years. Hezekiah ruled for twenty-nine years. Manasseh ruled for fifty-five years. Amon ruled for two years. Josiah ruled for thirty-one years. Jehoahaz ruled for three months. Jehoiakim ruled for eleven years. Jehoiakin ruled for one hundred days. Zedekiah ruled for eleven years. The total time period of these kings was four hundred and fifty-five years, six months, and twenty days. In the third year of the rule of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar went up against Jerusalem and forced them to pay tribute. Israel remained in Jerusalem while paying tribute for twenty-nine years under Jehoiakim and eleven years under Zedekiah. Jerusalem remained in desolation for fifty years: seven weeks of years. The land rested for [those] weeks, when [its inhabitants] were in the land of [their] enemies, for it did not keep Sabbath when during the weeks when they were in the land. After seventy years, Cyrus, the Persian, issued a decree in his kingdom and proclaimed [their] return to them. After the return Israel re-

[136] 1Kings 6:1

mained in Jerusalem for seventy weeks, as Daniel had prophesied. These weeks [totalled] four hundred and ninety years. After the death of Christ the King, Jerusalem was destroyed, and will not be inhabited again, until the end of the judgements. It remains desolate. But the grapecluster was removed from the cluster, the cluster was given over to destruction, and the people were deprived of the blessing.

47. From Jesus, the blessing passed to the peoples. For he said to the Jews, *"The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to the people that bears fruit."* [137] And to us he said, *"I will be with you until the end of the age."* [138] Again he said, *"You are in me and I am in you."* [139] And the apostle testifies, *"If anyone among you does not have the Spirit of God in him, this person does not belong to [God]."* [140] Again he said, *"You are the temple of God, and the Spirit of Christ* [141] *lives in you."* [142] And the prophet said, *"I will live in them and walk with them."* [143] And he encouraged us in himself, that we might not be afraid of the trials which come against us, and he said to us, *"If they have heard and kept my word, they will keep your word also, and if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you."* [144] He also said to us, *"You are not of the world, just as I am not of it."* And he said, *"If you are of the world, the world loves that which belongs to it."* [145] Since we have received these commandments from Jesus our Lifegiver, it is not possible for us to walk in a way other than the way that he walked. If they persecuted Christ, we too [will be persecuted]. If they hated Christ, we too [will be hated]. If they imprisoned Christ, we too [will be imprisoned].[146] If

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[137] Matthew 21:43
[138] Matthew 28:20
[139] John 14:20
[140] Romans 8:9
[141] A and C: "the Spirit of God"
[142] 1Corinthians 3:16
[143] Leviticus 26:12
[144] John 15:20
[145] John 15:19
[146] A omits this sentence

they struck Christ on the cheek, we too [will be struck on the cheek]. If Christ suffered, we too [will suffer].

48. For great is the gift of the Blessed One[147] which is with us. When [we were] in our sins and he was not constrained, he desired that we be justified. And though he was not assisted by our pleasing actions, he admonished us so that we might be pleasing before him. When we do not wish to make requests of him, he is angry with us. He calls to us at every moment: *"Ask and expect, and when you seek, you will find."* [148] For his riches satisfy when there is need. For there is no person who says 'I have received enough' when he takes from his glorious treasury. He takes pleasure in those who make requests of him. He calls to us at every moment that we might ask and expect, and when we seek we will find. And those who press forward to receive from him and taste his riches have need again to receive from him. For who is like he who said *"Ask and receive"* and is angry with us when we do not make requests of him?

49. Though we did not ask him, he sent to us his gift, which was not found to be with us formerly. He sent Christ as a human being, so that he might ridicule the Evil One and his armies, and chase away from us the conquered army. He sent the Righteous One to us, that he might be judged and condemned, and so that the guilty might become innocent through the judgement of the Righteous One. He sent the Strong One in the form of our weakness, so that he might make strong our weakness against the strength of the Evil One. He put on a body, made from dust, and drew it into his nature. He hid in us the salt which dissolves decay, so that when the Serpent wishes to approach and eat, he will loathe the salt, which he is not able to eat. He sent to us the Righteous One, his Son, to die a death like ours, so that death might be confounded in him. How great is the gift of the Good One, which he has given to the

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[147] The beginning of the next section makes it clear that "Blessed One" means God, not Christ.

[148] Matthew 7:7. Here God is portrayed as speaking through Christ.

little ones! What more could he give to us than his Son? When our sins were greater than they are now, he sent this gift to us. Now that we have been justified, what will he give us[149] if not life with the one who came to us, he who did not spare his Son but sent him to dishonour?[150]

50. How wondrous and great is his gift which is with us! For the King left his country as a way of [bringing about] our healing, and he conducted himself in the manner of a weak body, in a birth like ours, and in a dishonour greater than ours. He endured all these things on our behalf, and we have received his gift, the assurance of life. This is what I say: God has no greater gift than this that he could have sent to us. And when he came he received a pledge from us and went to his place, and said to us, *"You are in me and I am in you."* [151] And the apostle said, *"He has raised us up and seated us with him in heaven."* [152] The body that he put on from us is the beginning of our resurrection: he set it free from slavery and it entered into him. He established for us his promises that we would be with him. He said clearly, *"The place where I am you also will be."* [153] Now let us rejoice in the pledge which has been taken from us and which sits in glory with the glorious King.

51. How great is the gift of the Good One which is with us! The King took from us a pledge which is like him; the Lover has made it and will guard it to the end. This is a son of Adam, a body which came from Mary, who was led from us to the place of life. The weak body became strong, and received a glory which was greater and more wondrous than that which Adam stripped off in his fall.

52. We rejoice in you, beloved infant, for you have prepared for us a path to the place of our desire. We give thanks to you, healer

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[149] Romans 5:7-11
[150] Romans 8:32
[151] John 14:20
[152] Ephesians 2:6
[153] John 14:3

of our diseases, for you have hidden your Spirit in us, a remedy for our bodies. Through you we worship your Father, the Most High, who has raised us up in you and called us to be with him. Through you we give thanks to the one who sent you, who desired that we might live through the death of his Only-Begotten One. Through you we glorify the Self-Existent One, who separated you from his being and sent you to us. Through you we exalt the One who sits in his holiness, who has himself sanctified our bodies through the pledge that we have received. We will give thanks with our mouths as much as possible to the Strong One who has come to give life to the weak. We will be diligent each day to speak praise through the beloved Son to the Father who sent him. We will rejoice in his gift so that he too may rejoice in us. In him we will give thanks to his Father, so that he might also acknowledge us. In need, we ask for a gift from the treasury, for his need is to give life to the needy. How great and glorious is his gift which is with us! He sought glorification from the lowly, he who is glorious even if we do not give him glory, and is exalted even if we do not exalt him. For he has a need to give, and wants us to ask, so that through our requests he might give us the life that he promised, and we might live with his Only-Begotten Son. It is his to give, and ours to ask. He has life, and we need to escape from death. He has life, and he has called us to receive. With him is goodness, and it is placed in our hands, so that we might escape from the Evil One. He has life, and light is with him, and he warns us to escape from the darkness of death. For there is no one who can stand at the end of his treasures, and there is no one who can comprehend the depth of his wisdom.

53. O Good and Kind One, open the gate to our requests! Give ear to our prayer and hear our supplication, even as your Beloved One taught us: *"Keep on praying and do not grow weary."* [154] And again he repeated and warned us: *"Pray so that you will not enter into temptation."* [155] Again he wrote to us so that we might know your kindness, and he said, *"There is nothing for which you will ask God in your*

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[154] Luke 18:1

[155] Matthew 26:41; Mark 14:38; Luke 22:46

prayer and he will not give to you." [156] And now, it is not because of our good works or righteousness that we are confident and pray before you, but because of your compassion, for you are good and kind. For we pray before you as guilty ones, but you, as one who is kind and good, have heard our prayer. We pray before you as those who are weak, but you, as one who is strong, will not refuse our requests. For our hands are extended and our hearts are inclined toward you to ask and petition for grace from you. Our minds rejoice, for you will hear our petition. Our senses will be attentive to ask confidently. Open our ears to the prayer of your words, and the eyes of our hearts will be directed upwards to you. Hear our prayer and receive our petition; grant our wish; give ear to and hear our voice! See our slavery, and have pity on your people in the time of their affliction! Hasten your mercy, and show your might! May you not chasitize us in your anger, nor rebuke us in your wrath. We are your people, clay for your hands, the work of your fingers. You have created us in your image; in your form you have made us; with your hands you have fashioned us. Your Spirit is in us. May you not be angry forever, nor stand far away. When we had gone astray, you saved us. When we were scattered, you brought us together. When we were in darkness, you gave us light. When we were imprisoned, you brought us out. When we were captured, you snatched us away. When we were in fetters, you set us free. From a confining pit, when we had no hope, you called us to hope in you. Though we were sinners you took pleasure in us, that we might be justified. Though we did not ask you, you sent us your Only-Begotten One. Through his blood you saved us, and through him we know you. You sent him to us though we did not call out to you. You made our wickedness fall upon him, though we did not ask you. You sent him down to Sheol, though we did not compel you. You humiliated him on our behalf, though we had angered you. You saved us through his suffering, though our wickedness was great before you. But now, as we make petition and worship and give thanks and glorify your mercies through him, hear our prayer, receive our petition, see our shame, and be aware of our

[156] Matthew 21:22

humiliation. You yourself will rise up for your plundered people, for your ruined house, for your altars which have been torn down, for your priests who have been massacred, for your covenant which has been persecuted, for your scriptures which have been hidden, for us, we who have been dispersed and plundered. Our disgrace has increased and our people have been scattered. Our blood has been shed and our covenant has been spread out. Have regard for our humiliation, our shame, and our disgrace.

54. Whom shall we seek out, that he may hear our prayer? To whom shall we go? For we are yours. You have chastised us in your wrath. You have called us in your compassion. You have grieved over us. Do not neglect us when you grow weary of us. Do not be patient about our humiliation and shame, just as your prophet, when he was troubled as we are, asked and said, *"In your patience, do not lead me away."* [157] Hear our prayer, as [you heard the prayer] of Moses, your friend, and let [our] enemies be repaid, like Pharoah the oppressor. Take notice of our petition, even as you heard Joshua, and Amalek was destroyed and the memory of him erased. You are the God of the first and the last. You listened to Moses and made Pharaoh sink. You heard Aaron and the plague was stopped. You turned away your wrath through the zeal of Phineas. You helped Joshua son of Nun and his enemies were confused. You heard Samson in the time of his humiliation, and brought vengeance for him on the Philistines who were provoking him. You avenged David on Saul, his persecutor, and you executed judgement on Absalom the instigator. Samuel made atonement for his people before you, and you showed your greatness to those who rejected your rule. You executed judgement on behalf of a persecuted Elijah, and through his prayer the prophets of Baal were wiped out.[158] Micaiah was guarded through your many mercies and his persecutor fell and died in battle.[159] You showed your wonders to the oppressors of Elisha when they came to Samaria, and they

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[157] Jeremiah 15:15
[158] 1Kings 18:40
[159] 1Kings 22:13-18

knew your greatness.[160] You answered Hezekiah when he was surrounded by trouble, and you demonstrated your might in Sennacherib and his army.[161] You heard Asa, and you came to the aid of Jehosaphat, and immediately were avenged on all those who caused them trouble.[162] You heard Jonah from the depths of the sea, from the bowels of the fish, and from the waves that surrounded him. You answered Daniel when he was thrown in the pit, and you rescued him from the mouth of the lions.[163] You helped Hananiah and his brothers in the midst of the fiery furnace, and the flame burned the slanderers.[164] You answered Mordecai and Esther in their distress and saved your people, and Haman the persecutor was put to shame. You brought Jeremiah up from the pit of filth,[165] and made him find favour before the king of Babylon.

55. Have regard, Lord, for the enslavement of your people! Have regard, Lord, for our petition,[166] and hear our prayer! Our sanctuary is destroyed, and our house of worship is deserted. Our priests are massacred, and our heads are covered. Our virgins are humiliated and our covenant is dispersed. Take pity, Lord, take pity on the poor ones, the refugees, and the weary ones for whom there is no rest and who have no place to lay their heads. The paths are deserted and the roads are unused. Our eyes grow dark and our hearts grieve. Hear our prayer and receive our petition! If we have done wrong and exasperate you, have mercy because of your great name. We have no other confidence, nor hope, nor rest apart from you. For heaven is yours and the earth is yours. The day is yours and the night is yours. You created the sun and the moon. The seas, for which you have established limits, glorify you with their waves, and obey your command; the sea is confined by sand and

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[160] 2Kings 6:8-23
[161] 2Kings 19:35; 2Chronicles 32:20-21
[162] 2Chronicles 14:8-14; 20:1-30
[163] Daniel 5:17-24
[164] Daniel 3:22
[165] Jeremiah 38:13
[166] *B* omits "for our petition"

fulfills your will. All beings look to you and wait for you. Your promise is sufficient for all of your creatures, and there is no one who is able to resist your will. To you belong the lights of the firmament; the winds and the hurricanes glorify your name. The wild beast and the bird of the sky and the fish of the sea look to you. Arise and help us with your great strength, so that all peoples on the face of the earth might know that there is no one like you and no one besides you. Pharoah said concerning you, *"Who is God?,"* [167] and you made him sink as a warrior in the terrible sea. Sennacherib considered you as [one of] the gods of the peoples, but you made him speechless and showed your greatness.[168] You helped Mattathiah when he burned with your zeal,[169] and you heard Judah and Simeon and their brothers, and helped them[170] in the amazing battles which you brought about through them.

56. Let your compassion be seen and let your mercy be made known! Leave a remnant of your plundered people, and bring about a rebuilding of your house in our days. Lift up our heads, which have been downcast in our sin. Receive the offering of your people, and may our prayer please you. Let closed gates be opened, and let overturned altars be set right. May our plundered people be gathered together, and let them rejoice in the rebuilding of your house. May the blood of the righteous call out to you, and may your pleasure be in them as in the scent of incense. Have regard, Lord, have regard for the purity of your covenant[171] which has fallen into the hands of the evil, who rejoice in our ruin. You, our King, are accustomed to showing your mercy, and we are accustomed at every time[172] to ask for your compassion. We petition you on account of [our] confidence in your kindness. Your goodness is not held back from those who are evil. You make your sun rise on

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[167] Exodus 5:2
[168] 2Kings 19:12
[169] 1Maccabees 2
[170] A omits "and helped them"
[171] A: "your people"
[172] A omits "at every time"

the good[173] as well as on the evil; you make your rain fall on the righteous and on the wicked. We know that in every time your custom is to hear the afflicted, for in various times you have answered the captives, brought relief to the persecuted, strengthened the weak, lifted up the humble, saved those who are troubled, delivered those who have been plundered, set free those in prison, given light to those in darkness, satisfied the hungry, and made wealthy the poor, in every generation. We know that you have done these things for your servants. It is you who have made known to us, *"I am the first and I am the last."* [174] You are the God of the first and the last. You are the God of the two worlds: all that is and all that shall be.

57. Who shall we go to that would hear us? Who shall we look to that would help us? Who shall we wait for that would save us? Who shall we pray to that would receive our petition? We are yours and you are our God. Let not the blood of the righteous, which has been shed through iniquity, be hidden from you, but let it be placed on a smooth rock,[175] so that wrath might arise upon it as payment. May it not be that your compassion is held back by your wrath, for your goodness will never be overcome by our evil, and your mercy will not cease on account of our wickedness. Your nature is not corrupted because of us. Your name is 'Good One'. Show us your goodness: your goodness for us and your justice for those who are against us, for both of them are found in you and are in your hands.

58. We worship you, self-existent One, who have made us from nothing and fashioned us in the image of your likeness. You sent a portion[176] of your Spirit of life into us, and you have left us in the world as sojourners before you; our death and our life is in your hands. What are human beings before you? [They are] like a vapour

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[173] A omits "on the good"
[174] Isaiah 44:6; 48:12
[175] Ezekiel 24:8
[176] The phrase "a portion" translates the preposition ܡܢ.

rising from a pot,[177] or like dust that the whirlwind stirs up. They are like a shifting shadow or an early morning cloud. They are like dust which passes away or like the flower that fades.[178] If it is your will, they exist, but if it is not your will, they do not exist. If you look upon the earth it trembles, and if you turn away your face, its inhabitants perish.[179] Your will is accepted by all your creatures, and your command is followed by every being. The sun rises at your word, and through your will goes around your whole creation. The moon is wondrously transformed, and you set it up for the division of times.[180] You arranged the lights in the firmament, and they are an adornment for all creatures. The winds blow at your pleasure, and from time to time demonstrate their strength: they stir up the sea and shake the mountains, and again at your command give free scope to your creation. The birds float in the air, and travel their routes like a worn path, and the fish of the sea do likewise. When fish rise up to the air they die, and when birds fall into the sea they are suffocated. To you belongs that which has been and that which is, and by your agency all beings are distinguished.

59. We glorify you, you who are clothed in glory. We give thanks to you, though you are without need. We exalt you from the lower depths, but your dwelling place is in the heaven of heavens. Your will [reaches] beyond heaven, and your command [penetrates] below the earth. Our hands have not made you, and our fingers have not grown weary over you. We reproduce you in our hearts, and imitate you in our minds. Our reasoning has caught sight of you, and we have called you 'God'. We have called you 'Father', for you have fathered us, and 'King' and 'God', for it is you who have called us. We have defined you but that is not enough for us; we make comparisons to you but there is no one like you. Your appearance is concealed, but your power is great. Your greatness is

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[177] A omits "rising from a pot"
[178] Isaiah 40:7-8
[179] Psalm 104:29
[180] Psalm 104:19

hidden, but creation depends on you. The great waters are contained in the hollow of your hand. You weigh the high mountains with a balance and the hills with a scale.[181] The earth is stretched out, wide and spacious, yet its size is sufficient to make it a footstool for your feet. You have measured the dust of the earth in the palm of your hand; heaven is your throne but it cannot contain you. Though your name is great and your works are exalted, you have diminished your greatness to accommodate our language: our mouths are sufficient for you, and you live among us. You dwell with the righteous, and [their] place is spacious for you. Your greatness slips into the small heart; you have made us temples and caused you glory to dwell there. You have called us your temples, and your glory marches with us, just as you made known through the mouths of your prophets: *"I will live in them and I will walk with them."* [182] You live in those who are peaceful and dwell in those who are humble. You find rest in those who are peaceful and good, and you take pleasure in the penitent. You have regard for the just and rejoice over the poor. You borrow from the needy as a lowly man.[183] There is no limit to your compassion; there is no measure of your goodness. All the mouths [in the world] are not enough [to describe] you; all the languages [in the world] are insufficient [to define] you. When a person defines [something], he remains in himself, and when he extends his mind, [even] this is not enough. If his intelligence rises higher than the heavens, he still finds himself walking on the earth. If his reason [descends] below to the depths for a short while, it returns [quickly] to its world, and his thought ceases. Who is able [to describe] that which is higher than heaven? There is nothing to say about that which is placed below the earth. Upon what is the firmament extended? Upon what does the sky hang? Upon what does the earth rest? Upon what is the abyss fastened?

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[181] Isaiah 40:12

[182] Leviticus 26:12; 2Corinthians 6:16

[183] Presumably this refers to the incarnation.

60. We are of Adam, and here [on earth] we know little. This alone we know: there is one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one faith, and one baptism. To say more than this is of no use to us. If we speak we will fail, and if we investigate we will be harmed. There are many who have forgotten the path and left the road and travelled in a trackless waste, on a path of difficulties. They have conceived and meditated on corrupt words; they have prophecied falsehood and forsaken God. They wish to understand, but they have lost discernment. Their intelligences are in the dark, groping in the gloom.

61. O child of Adam, dust taken from the earth, established in a way of thinking that leads to destruction! Your mind gives birth to other gods, and your reason constructs things that have not been seen by it. You have not ascended above; you are bound by the earth. You have not descended below, that you would know what is there. You make conjectures and speak though you have not seen. You have become a liar, a speaker of falsehood and deceit. Speak to me when I ask you: the sun that you see, of what is it made? Is there a soul in it? Does it have knowledge? Does it have discernment? If you are going to believe anything that I am saying to you, it should be that the sun and the moon are like fire and water, which do not perceive and do not discern. Fire does not reject anything that you give it. It does not abhor that which is evil and despicable. It does not know what is honourable or discern what is treated with contempt. The same is true of water, for creation is without discernment. The sun and the moon, the stars and the winds, lightning and clouds, fire and water: all of these things are created things for which there is an [established] course. They were made to serve the world from the beginning, and as they travel their path there is no discernment in them. Fire devours dung and sewage, and does not say 'Enough!', for this is its nature. The sun rises on corpses and filth; it grows hot in its strength, but is has no discernment. Water rushes over every unclean thing, and mixes with the uncleanness of mud; it has no knowledge of its own. All of these things are the servants of heaven and earth, made without souls for the service of the world. Even the earth, which [usually] remains quiet, [can] shake itself from its roots when it desires. Know this, person who does not understand: the will of God carries each of these things, and there is nothing apart from his will.

We who know that God is one will confess, worship, praise, exalt, adore, sanctify, and glorify his greatness, through Jesus his Son, our Saviour,[184] who chose us for himself and brought us to [God]. In him we have come to know [God] and have become his worshippers: a people, a Church, a holy assembly. Glory and honour to the Father, and to his Son and to his living and holy Spirit, from the mouths of all those who glorify him, above and below, forever and ever, amen and amen!

62. As the first of all good actions, this is required before God: a person must believe that there is one God, and with faithfulness keep his commandments. If a person acknowledges that there is one God but transgresses his commandments and does not follow them, he does not really believe that there is one God, as the teacher of the peoples said, *"They profess to know God, but in their works they deny him."* [185] Again, Isaiah said, *"This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."* [186] And David said, *"With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse."* [187] How is it that they profess to know God but in their actions deny him? If a person believes that there is one God but does not do what God commands, [this belief] that there is one God is not established in him. God has commanded: *"Keep my commandments and do them."* [188] It is clear that whoever does not keep the commandments of God has denied him, for the Lord of the commandments is not established in him. God said, *"Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not give false testimony; honour your father and mother."* [189] *"Do not do to your neighbour the things that you yourself do not like."* [190] For the

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[184] A: "Jesus his Firstborn Son, who chose…"

[185] Titus 1:16

[186] Isaiah 29:13

[187] Psalm 62:5

[188] Leviticus 22:31

[189] Exodus 20:12-16; Deuteronomy 5:16-20

[190] Tobit 4:15; cf. Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31. Aphrahat's negative form of the Golden Rule matches that of the book of Tobit, while the Gospel writers make use of the positive form.

person who believes that God judges the murderer does not murder, and in the person who murders, it is not established that God exists. The person who believes that God judges the adulterer does not commit adultery, and in the person who commits adultery, it is not established that God exists. The person who believes that God judges thieves does not steal, and in the person who steals, it is not established that God exists. All the commandments are likewise.

63. Above all, our Lifegiver has commanded us: *"Do not swear falsely. Whoever swears will be condemned at the judgement."* [191] How can the person who is convinced that there is one God swear on him and be false? Take note that it is clear that whoever strays from these commandments has denied God.[192] For to swear and to deceive in one's oath is an exceeding evil before God, for our Saviour, with a great warning, commanded in his teaching, *"Do not swear by heaven, which is the throne of God."* [193] For if you swear falsely by heaven, how can you lift your eyes to heaven and make petition to the one who sits in heaven? *"And do not swear by the earth, which is a footstool beneath his feet,"* [194] lest, after you have sworn falsely by the earth, each time you pray on it, it shakes beneath you, since you have deceived the footstool of the feet of God. *"And do not swear on Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King,"* [195] lest, after you have sworn falsely on the place of worship, your face is ashamed to stand there and pray, and your prayer does not rise up from the house which you have betrayed, and your will is not accomplished. *"And do not swear by you head, for you are not able to make a single strand of your hair either black or white,"* [196] lest, after you have sworn on your head and have broken faith, your head is put to shame, since the name of your Lord had been commemorated on it, as the apostle said, *"The*

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[191] Matthew 5:33
[192] A: "denied the works of God"
[193] Matthew 5:34
[194] Matthew 5:35
[195] Matthew 5:35
[196] Matthew 5:36

head of a man is Christ." [197] O you who swears by your head and deceives! If the three great and glorious[198] names (Father, Son, and Spirit of holiness) are established in you, those which were commemorated on your head when you received the sign of your life, and if baptism is established in you, then you will not betray your head. Know that you have no authority to swear by your head. Rather, *"Let your words be 'Yes, yes', and 'no, no.'"* And he said, *"Anything more than this is from the Evil One."* [199] For to deceive by swearing on God is more evil than all the sins that people do. If a person transgresses one of God's commands, he stands and prays and petitions God, so that perhaps he might forgive him. But the one who swears falsely on God, to whom can he petition? How can he petition God, of whom he is a lying servant, the God who is not established in him when he prays? [200]

64. The kings of Israel committed great and serious sins. Some of them abandoned God and worshipped idols. Some of them committed adultery with the wives of their companions. They also murdered and fornicated. But they are not given as much blame as is placed on the heads of those who swear falsely. When the people of Israel were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, the wicked king under whom the whole land was subjugated, he led hostages from among them to Babylon. [The rest of] them and their kings he left in the land, through a covenant without an oath. They established it [by saying], "We will serve you." Jehoiachim established the covenant without oaths, but afterwards rebelled and broke faith, and when he broke faith he was killed. [Nebuchadnezzar] appointed Jehoiachin his son to the kingship after him, and [Jehoicahin] established a covenant without oaths, saying "I will not rebel." But he was deceptive in his covenant and he rebelled against the king of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar sent [men] and bound him in chains and escorted him to Babylon, and he was in prison there for

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[197] 1Corinthians 11:3
[198] A omits "glorious"
[199] Matthew 5:37
[200] Cf. 1Samuel 2:25

thirty-seven years. And [Nebuchadnezzar] appointed Zedekiah his uncle to the kingship. Then Nebuchadnezzar thought and took counsel: "How can I leave him in the kingship and be sure that he will not rebel?" His counsellors said to him, "Ask the priests who know the Law." So Nebuchadnezzar called the priests and said to them, "How do I know that you will serve me and not rebel?" And they said to him, "We and our king swear by the God of Israel, and we establish [this] covenant through an offering which ascends on the altar." Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "I swear to you by the God of Israel: if you swear falsely on him, he will destroy you by my hand. I will not swear to you by the gods of Babylon." Then Zedekiah and the priests and the nobles brought a calf, laid their hands on its head and slaughtered it. The priests took blood from the calf and poured it around the altar, and put the fat up on the altar as a sweet fragrance. They took the calf and cut it in two, and the leaders of Judah, namely, the priests and the scribes of the people, and Zedekiah, the king, as well, passed through the halves. They established a covenant with an oath on the God of Israel: "We will not rebel." And Nebuchadnezzar believed them. But afterwards they betrayed their oaths on the God of Israel and rebelled against the king of Babylon. At that time, Jeremiah and Ezekiel were prophesying to them, Jeremiah in Jerusalem and Ezekiel in captivity in Babylon. And when they broke their oath and rebelled, Jeremiah the prophet called out to them: "O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Zedekiah, the king, and all of Judah! Serve the king of Babylon and live. Do not break the oaths that you have sworn. Remember that you cut the calf in two and passed between its halves." But they did not listen to the prophet. When he repeatedly called out to them, they took him and threw him into a muddy pit, and some of them said, *"Come, let us strike him on his tongue and not listen to what he is saying."* [201]

65. Ezekiel also sent word to them from Babylon: "Do not break the oaths on the God of Israel that you have sworn!" But they did not listen to him. And when they did not listen to him, he spoke to

[201] Jeremiah 18:18

them in prophecy*: "Even as I live, says the Lord of lords, I will punish Zedekiah, who broke faith with the God of Israel and treated my oaths with contempt and made my covenant cease."* [202] And Jeremiah called out and warned them, *"Serve the king of Babylon and live, and let not this city become a desolation!"* [203] But again they did not listen to him. And when they had broken [their] oaths and had not listened to the prophets, the army of the Chaldeans came against them and surrounded Jerusalem from the ninth year of Zedekiah to the eleventh year. And when they rebelled Jeremiah also said to them, *"Go out to the king of Babylon, and you will live and not die."* [204] But they did not listen to him. And the city remained in anguish for a long time: the Chaldeans surrounded it for nineteen months, from the tenth [day] of the tenth month (which is January) of the ninth year [of Zedekiah], to the fifth month (which is Ab) of the eleventh year [of Zedekiah]. The city was captured on the ninth day of the fifth month. The Chaldeans entered Jerusalem and set fire to the house of God, upon which [the leaders of Judah] had sworn and deceived [Nebuchadnezzar]. They overturned the altar, upon which had been offered unacceptable fragrances from the calf of oaths. They took all the utensils used in the service of the house of the God of Israel. They burned the houses of the nobles who had sworn falsely, and the priests were taken captive and went to Babylon.[205] And when Zedekiah escaped and went out from the city, the army of the Chaldeans siezed him in the Plain of Jericho. They bound him in chains, together with the nobles who had sworn with him. They brought him to the king of Babylon in the region of Hamath.[206] And it is written that he spoke judgement upon him, and said to him, "Why did you falsify the oaths on the God of Israel? Now, I am putting them [back] on your head!" And he put out his eyes and bound him with chains. He killed his sons in before his eyes, and killed the nobles who had sworn falsely. And he led him bound to

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[202] Ezekiel 17:19
[203] Jeremiah 27:17
[204] Jeremiah 38:17
[205] 2Kings 24:13-16
[206] Jeremiah 39:5

Babylon, and he was there until the day of [his] death. He destroyed Jerusalem because of the false oath, and their kingdom was given to Nebuchadnezzar, who believed in the God who exacts payment for oaths in his name.[207]

66. Concerning this our Lifegiver warned, *"Do not swear on yourselves,"*[208] for the Lord will not acquit the one who swears falsely on his name. Otherwise, if a person teaches his mouth to utter oaths in every situation, he will stumble, since he has taught his mouth to utter oaths. His tongue becomes a conduit for oaths. We know, my friend,[209] that many people among the brotherhood swear falsely and compel [others] to swear also. They kill themselves and their companions die, because they transgress the commandment[210] which our Saviour taught.

67. Among us, there is no confidence in this world, for everything in it is built on sand. The world and its things do not last; its pleasures fly away on swift wings. The children of Adam enter into the world naked, and they leave the same as when they came to it. Those who pursue wealth do not keep it; it is taken from them and given to others. Those who bring forth children do not enjoy them. They become a bitter taste on their palates, some through death, some through captivity, and those who remain dishonour their parents. Those who gain affections will not rely on them; in an instant, they can turn like a wheel. Those who build and plant will not greatly enjoy the [fruit of their work], for their enemies will snatch them [to add] to their wealth. They see them, and their souls are in anguish over [the fruit of] their work, that it has passed to others. Those who build cities and live in villages are not left in the midst of them: their enemies take them captive, and they become strangers from the land in which they were born. Those who become engaged to women and wish to rejoice die and are taken away in a

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[207] Literally: "his oaths"
[208] Matthew 5:36
[209] A and *B*: "my friends"
[210] A: "commandments"

short time, and their brides are taken by others, those who will never bear their name. After the death of those who pursue and worry over and store up treasures, [their treasures] go to others, and their friends enjoy their possessions, and their hands do not touch their wealth. Women pursue preparations and hope to enjoy their clothes, but after a short while they are torn for their dead. This is the building that is set on sand, and there is no reason for confidence that it will stand forever. Our treasure is in our promised place, and our thoughts will be in the place of our treasure.[211] There is nothing greater than the fear of God, and the person who keeps his commands is glorified. For many are called wise, but there is no wisdom like the fear of God.[212]

68. This is a brief reminder that I have written to you, my friend, including the matters you inquired about but also things that you did not ask me about, so that you might profit as I too have been helped. Those who give, rejoice, and those who receive, give praise. Those who sow in hope wait for the harvest, and the ploughed land upon which seed has fallen brings forth fruit and delights the labourer. Those who have and give ask and receive, but those who have and hold back are taking away [from others]. The one who took money and produced interest received glory and power as well as the tenth mina, but the one who hid [his master's money] had it taken from him, and he was sent to the place of lazy servants. The one who gives from what he has received is never lacking. The one who asks and receives from the treasury of the Lord, his Lord calls [him] to receive, and what he takes he gives to you even as he has received.

69. I have written this letter to you, my friend, in the month of Ab in the six hundred and fifty-sixth year of the kingdom of Alexander, son of Philip the Macedonian, and in the thirty-sixth year of Shapur, king of Persia, who has stirred up persecution,[213] and in the

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[211] Matthew 6:21

[212] Proverbs 5:10

[213] A adds: "our churches being uprooted"

fifth year after the churches had been uprooted, and in the year in which there was a great ravaging of martyrs in the land of the east, after writing those twenty-two previous chapters, arranged according to letters, one after the other. Read and learn, and remember your friend.

The demonstration on the grapecluster is completed.

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I have tried to make this bibliography as comprehensive as possible, knowing that the discussion about Aphrahat (past, present, and future) is inevitably wider and more diverse than what can be captured in such a list. Even so, I trust that what follows will be useful to students of the *Demonstrations*.

Since the format I follow here is somewhat different than what most readers will be used to, a word of explanation is in order. Instead of using the usual alphabetical approach, I have opted for a chronological presentation. The benefit of this is that the reader gains a clear sense of the history of scholarship in the field. The two entries for 2009 do not, I am sure, exhaust publications on Aphrahat in that year, but this was all that I could locate at time of printing.

In section II, authors are alphabetized within any given year. Some of the older sources are available free of charge at www.archive.org, in which case this website is given in brackets. Introductions to Aphrahat found in editions listed in section I are not included in section II. Unpublished dissertations have been included, though undoubtedly some have escaped my notice. Those subsequently published are not listed here as dissertations.

An alphabetical index of author names follows, with references to the dates of their publications. Also included below is a guide to publications in selected subject areas.

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